

THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
AND
THE FREE CHURCHES

*Proceedings of Joint Conferences held at
Lambeth Palace, 1921-1925*

EDITED BY

G. K. A. BELL

DEAN OF CANTERBURY

AND

W. L. ROBERTSON

SECRETARY OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF
THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES OF ENGLAND

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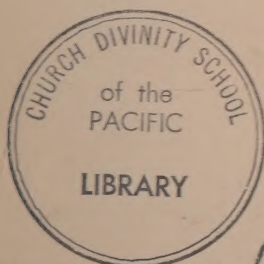
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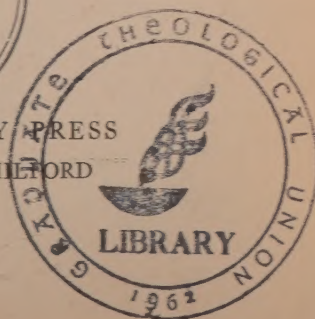
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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LTD.,
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS book is a collection of all the Documents issued up to date on the 'Appeal to all Christian People' in relation to the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England. Its object is simply to gather in a convenient form the present results of the Joint Conferences of Anglican and Free Church representatives, and it is published in the hope that the study of the Documents will lead to increased interest in Christian Reunion, and increased reflection and discussion among the rank and file on all sides. The deliberations are, for the present, suspended, but the definite hope is expressed by the two Archbishops and the Moderator of the Federal Council 'that they will not be regarded as concluded' (p. 66).

The actual course of the communications between the Archbishops and certain Bishops and the Federal Council is explained in the Preliminary Statement of June 19th, 1925, as printed on page 63. Here it is only necessary to recall the bare facts. The Appeal was issued by the Lambeth Conference in August 1920. The Federal Council, which is a limited but representative Body consisting of delegates officially appointed by the Annual Assemblies and Conferences of the various Free Churches, published a Provisional Statement in September 1920; and a considered Report on

'The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal' in May 1921: acting in both cases in conjunction with the National Free Church Council. A Joint Conference, consisting of the two Archbishops and other Bishops and 25 Free Church leaders, was appointed in September 1921. From 1921 to 1925 a series of meetings has been held for the purpose, not of negotiation, but of elucidation and explanation. The Joint Conference, and its Sub-Committee, which has held seventeen meetings under the Chairmanship of the Archbishop of York, have produced a number of joint or separate Statements which have all gone forward to the Federal Council. The Federal Council at successive Annual Assemblies has adopted Resolutions upon the work done, or the Memoranda transmitted, during the previous twelve months. All these Statements, Reports, Memoranda and Resolutions will be found in the pages which follow.

It may be well to add that the relation of the Federal Council to the individual Free Churches, and the reason for the present pause in the discussions, are both clearly stated in the following paragraph from the Preliminary Statement of June 19, 1925, (p. 65).

'The Joint Conference believes that the time has now come when there might well be some suspension of its activities in order that full opportunity may be given to the Churches represented on the Conference to study and understand the documents already submitted. Every one of the Churches represented and connected with the Federal Council received a copy of the Appeal, officially transmitted to each by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1920. And it is with the cordial approval of the individual Free Churches that the Federal Council has up to

this stage acted on their behalf for the purpose of elucidation and explication, deliberately leaving any "formal pronouncement on any scheme of union or proposals thereon . . . to the authoritative Assemblies or Courts of the various Churches concerned." "

G. K. A. B.

W. L. R.

September, 1925.

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MEMBERS OF THE JOINT CONFERENCE, 1925

- Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Rev. R. T. Davidson, D.D.).
- * Archbishop of York (The Most Rev. C. G. Lang, D.D.).
- Bishop of London (The Right Rev. A. F. Winnington-Ingram, D.D.).
- * Bishop of Winchester (The Right Rev. F. T. Woods, D.D.).
- * Bishop of Salisbury (The Right Rev. St. Clair G. A. Donaldson, D.D.).
- Bishop of Lichfield (The Right Rev. J. A. Kempthorne, D.D.)
- Bishop of Hereford (The Right Rev. M. L. Smith, D.D.).
- * Bishop of Ripon (The Right Rev. T. B. Strong, D.D.).
- * Bishop of Gloucester (The Right Rev. A. C. Headlam, D.D.).
- * Bishop of Truro (The Right Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D.).
- The Right Rev. Bishop Talbot, D.D.
- § † The Right Rev. Bishop Chase, D.D.
- ³ Rev. Walter H. Armstrong.
- ⁶ Rev. J. T. Barkby.
- ¹ Rev. Sidney M. Berry, M.A., D.D.
- * ² Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.
- ³ Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D.
- ² Rev. J. C. Carlile, C.B.E., D.D.
- ⁴ Sir Walter Essex.
- ² Rev. W. Y. Fullerton.
- * ¹ Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.
- ⁶ Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., D.C.L.
- ⁶ Rev. S. Horton.
- * ¹ Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D.
- * ³ Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.
- ³ Sir Henry Lunn, M.D.
- ² Mr. Herbert Marnham.
- ⁷ Bishop H. R. Mumford.
- ⁴ Rev. T. Nightingale.
- * ⁶ Prof. A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.
- ⁶ Rev. Alexander Ramsay, M.A., D.D.

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- * ⁵ Rev. W. L. Robertson, M.A.
 - ³ Right Hon. Walter Runciman, M.P.
 - †* ² Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D.
 - ¹ Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.
 - ³ Rev. J. Alfred Sharp.
 - * ⁵ Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.
 - ⁴ Rev. Henry Smith.
 - ¹ Right Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P.
 - ³ Rev. F. L. Wiseman, B.A.
 - ¹ Rev. Thomas Yates.
-

* Members of the Joint Sub-committee, 1925.

† Unable to take part in any of the proceedings of the Conference since 1924, owing to illness.

§ Died September 23, 1925.

¹ Congregational.

² Baptist.

³ Wesleyan.

⁴ United Methodist.

⁵ Presbyterian.

⁶ Primitive Methodist.

⁷ Moravian.

1. An Appeal to All Christian People

FROM THE BISHOPS ASSEMBLED IN THE LAMBETH
CONFERENCE OF 1920

AUGUST 1920

WE, Archbishops, Bishops Metropolitan, and other Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church in full communion with the Church of England, in Conference assembled, realizing the responsibility which rests upon us at this time and sensible of the sympathy and the prayers of many, both within and without our own Communion, make this appeal to all Christian people.

We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body. We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

I. We believe that God wills fellowship. By God's own act this fellowship was made in and through Jesus Christ, and its life is in His Spirit. We believe that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship, so far as this world is concerned, in an outward, visible, and united society, holding one faith, having its own recognized officers, using God-given means of grace, and inspiring all its members to the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God. This is what we mean by the Catholic Church.

II. This united fellowship is not visible in the world to-day. On the one hand there are other ancient episcopal Communion in East and West, to whom ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand there are the great non-episcopal Communion, standing for rich elements of truth, liberty and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected. With them we are closely linked by many affinities, racial, historical and spiritual. We cherish the earnest hope that all these Communion, and our own, may be led by the Spirit into the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. But in fact we are all organized in different groups, each one keeping to itself gifts that rightly belong to the whole fellowship, and tending to live **its own life apart from the rest.**

III. The causes of division lie deep in the past, and are by no means simple or wholly blameworthy. Yet none can doubt that self-will, ambition, and lack of charity among Christians have been principal factors in the mingled process, and that these, together with blindness to the sin of disunion, are still mainly responsible for the breaches of Christendom. We acknowledge this condition of broken fellowship to be contrary to God's will, and we desire frankly to confess our share in the guilt of thus crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of His Spirit.

IV. The times call us to a new outlook and new measures. The Faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided, and is thus unable to grow up into the fullness of the life of Christ. The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church. The removal of the barriers which have arisen between them

will only be brought about by a new comradeship of those whose faces are definitely set this way.

The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all Truth, and gathering into its fellowship all 'who profess and call themselves Christians,' within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ. Within this unity Christian Communions now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled.

V. This means an adventure of goodwill and still more of faith, for nothing less is required than a new discovery of the creative resources of God. To this adventure we are convinced that God is now calling all the members of His Church.

VI. We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the whole-hearted acceptance of:—

The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of Himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal confession of belief:

The divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ:

A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.

VII. May we not reasonably claim that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry? It is not that we call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the Episcopate. On the contrary, we thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace. But we submit that considerations alike of history and of present experience justify the claim which we make on behalf of the Episcopate. Moreover, we would urge that it is now and will prove to be in the future the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Church. But we greatly desire that the office of a Bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner, and more truly express all that ought to be involved for the life of the Christian Family in the title of Father-in-God. Nay more, we eagerly look forward to the day when through its acceptance in a united Church we may all share in that grace which is pledged to the members of the whole body in the apostolic rite of the laying-on of hands, and in the joy and fellowship of a Eucharist in which as one Family we may together, without any doubtfulness of mind, offer to the one Lord our worship and service.

VIII. We believe that for all the truly equitable approach to union is by the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences. To this end, we who send forth this appeal would say that if the authorities of other Communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, Bishops and clergy of our Communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family life. It is not in our power to know how far this suggestion may be acceptable to those to whom we offer it. We can only

say that we offer it in all sincerity as a token of our longing that all ministries of grace, theirs and ours, shall be available for the service of our Lord in a united Church.

It is our hope that the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship.

In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonouring the Holy Spirit of God, whose call led us all to our several ministries, and whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited Church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfil the same.

IX. The spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church in days to come, for which the world is manifestly waiting, depends upon the readiness with which each group is prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service to the world.

We place this ideal first and foremost before ourselves and our own people. We call upon them to make the effort to meet the demands of a new age with a new outlook. To all other Christian people whom our words may reach we make the same appeal. We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed.

2. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England, and the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England

PROVISIONAL STATEMENT ON THE APPEAL
SEPTEMBER 28, 1920

[The following Provisional Statement was issued on September 28, 1920, by the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England at their Annual Assembly and was endorsed by the National Free Church Council. It was thus issued under their joint authority.]

The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England, being the first Assembly of representatives duly elected by the Free Churches meeting since the Lambeth Conference, feels called upon to give consideration to the important pronouncement issued by the Anglican episcopate on the subject of Reunion.

The Council realizes the greatness and seriousness of the issues involved in this matter, which affects the whole future of religion in this country and beyond it. The Council has taken steps to set up a Committee representative of the constituent Churches, with instructions to submit the pronouncement of the Lambeth Conference, in so far as it bears on Reunion, to a careful examination in the light of the principles of the New Testament and the evangelical conception of the Church and the ministry, and to prepare a statement thereon for the consideration of the Council, with the view of transmitting the results of their examination to the Authorities of the Free Churches, on which will fall the duty of dealing with the whole question; and therefore it does not desire at present to record any final opinion or to anticipate what the judgement of the Churches may be.

But it feels warranted in declaring as follows :

1. The Council is humbly thankful to Almighty God for the place which the recovery of the visible unity of the Church of Christ has in the minds and hearts of so many Christian people; and it joins earnestly in the prayer that the spirit of Christian unity may continue to grow, and the expression of it be made increasingly manifest.
2. The Council recognizes and heartily reciprocates the brotherly and eirenical spirit which characterizes the Lambeth Appeal; and it will seek continually to foster this spirit among the Churches, whatever differences of judgement may and must arise in the discussion of particular proposals. The Council is prepared to welcome many things in the Lambeth Document, which, it trusts, may be the beginning of new and happier relations between conformist and non-conformist Churches in England.
3. But, passing to the practical proposals contained therein, the Council, while finding itself in sympathy with much that is put forward by the Conference, is constrained in frankness to say that there are fundamental provisions in these proposals which do not command its assent. Before, however, pronouncing on these, the Council would be willing to discuss them with representatives of the Anglican Communion in order that no misapprehension may exist as to their meaning.
4. The Council eagerly welcomes everything in the Lambeth proposals which would further religious intercourse among the Churches, and it will respond to these in all available ways. Especially does the Council desire that those who belong to the one Lord should gather together at their Lord's Table.

The Council does not deem it necessary or advisable at the present stage to go into further discussion of this great

8 *The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal*

issue; it calls on all faithful people to whom it may address itself to give themselves to prayerful consideration of the whole question, that He, Whose living Spirit is the supreme guide and final law of the Church, may lead us all in His way of truth and peace, and that it may be made manifest to the world that we are one in Him.

3. *The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal*

[This Report was prepared by the Joint Committee referred to in the Provisional Statement (No. 2). The Committee had the Rev. Dr. W. B. Selbie as Chairman and the Rev. Dr. P. Carnegie Simpson as Convener of the drafting Sub-Committee, and included Baptists, Congregationalists, Wesleyan Methodists, Presbyterians, Primitive Methodists, United Methodists, and one Moravian. The Federal Council received the Report and authorized its transmission to the Authorities of each of the federated denominations. The Report was published by the joint authority of the Federal Council and the National Free Church Council.]

MAY 22, 1921

I

When the Spirit of the Lord moves a sister Church, occupying a great place in this country and extending into many parts of the world, to appeal to Christendom on the subject of Reunion, and when the appeal is made with the sincerity and impressiveness of the recent declarations from Lambeth, such an approach is to be met not only with respect, but also with earnest and cordial welcome. The subject is a great one, and to-day it presses on the hearts and the consciences of Christian people as it has never pressed before. The Evangelical Free Churches of England share in the sense alike of its importance and of its urgency. Moreover, we recognize in the Lambeth Appeal a deep and grave concern over the evils of disunion, which we also feel. As Free Churchmen, we acknowledge that our concern over

these evils has often been too slight, and we would learn from others who have felt it more profoundly. In now approaching the consideration of the far-reaching issues raised by this communication, we desire to be freed from all prejudice, as also from any seeking of ends other than those which should be sought in Christ's Church and which may serve His Kingdom. We pray that His Spirit, who is the Spirit at once of truth and of clarity, may be our guide.

It is not necessary to recall in more than the fewest words the circumstances out of which the question, in its present form, has arisen. The Conference of more than two hundred and fifty Bishops of the Anglican Communion, gathered from all parts of the world, which met at Lambeth last July, devoted special attention to the subject of the Reunion of Christendom. They not only deplored the broken fellowship and the unhappy divisions which so long have crippled the work of Christ's Church, as His appointed witness to the world, but declared that the times call for 'a new outlook and new measures.' 'Inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church of Christ on earth,' they felt themselves called of the Holy Spirit to take a marked initial step in order to prepare the way for this manifestation to the world of our oneness in Christ Jesus our Lord. They issued *An Appeal to all Christian People*; and this, during the last six months, has stirred multitudes of Christian hearts.

A copy of this Appeal has, we understand, been sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the recognized authorities of the various Free Churches in England, and the subject will doubtless be brought before their several Assemblies or Conferences meeting in the course of this year. The Federal Council has no authority, nor has it any desire or intention, to frame a direct reply to this communication. Each church will take its own course and make its own response. But as all non-episcopal churches are alike

vitality interested in this matter, and as the larger non-episcopal churches in England are officially represented in the Free Church Federation, the Federal Council, after careful consideration, has thought it well that (in conjunction with the National Free Church Council) ¹ a statement should be issued, for the information of the churches we represent, to recall and to express fundamental evangelical principles held by us in common, and their bearing on the present issue. These principles must determine our attitude to the Appeal and its practical proposals, and are, in our view, of vital importance at a time which may prove to be an epoch in the history of Christendom.

Before entering on this discussion, we would realize that the whole matter is more than one between our brethren of other branches of the Church and ourselves. It is a matter between all the churches and their Lord. The Church being His Church, it is His mind and His will which we must set before us to be our rule and guide. We must consult with Him even more than confer with each other. We have our various thoughts and plans about unity; He who loves His Church has His own thoughts of unity. If we all could but learn of Him, we should be at one.

II

We may begin by briefly summarizing the Lambeth proposals.

Three remarks may be made as to the general character of the scheme. One is that it is meant to secure, or to lead

¹ It may be useful to explain that the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches is a limited but representative body, consisting of delegates officially appointed by the Annual Assemblies and Conferences of the various Free Churches, and the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches is a body consisting of delegates chosen from the local Free Church Councils, on which the various denominations are represented, and also of personal Members.

the way to securing, a reunion of the whole of Christendom; and its details are to be read in the light of this catholic ideal. A second is that it seeks a unity which is not mere uniformity, but which shall preserve differing types of worship and polity under one faith and order. The third is that the Bishops have, in effect, abandoned their former standpoint, from which terms were laid down for the union of other churches with the Anglican Church. They now rather invite the co-operation of other churches in a common endeavour to recover the unity which has been lost. These general features we should recognize and appreciate.

From them we pass to the practical proposals of the scheme. And here it must be understood that, in the four paragraphs following, we are attempting to set forth not our own views, but the Bishops' presentation of their scheme.

The key-note is fellowship—'God wills fellowship'; and this is brought to us in and through Jesus Christ and His Spirit. But it is meant by Him to be also manifested in 'an outward visible and united society,' having its common faith, its recognized officers, its Divine means of grace, and its vocation to the service of the Kingdom of God. That is what is meant by the Catholic Church. Such a fellowship is not visible to-day. We are in a condition of broken fellowship—organized into separate groups—and this divides the Body and delays the victory of the Kingdom. God is calling upon all the members of His Church on earth to 'an adventure of goodwill and of faith,' towards the achievement of a reunited Catholic Church.

This ideal, it is submitted, will be found to involve the acceptance of the following fundamentals: (1) the Holy Scriptures and the Nicene Creed as respectively the ultimate standard and 'the sufficient statement of the Christian faith'; (2) the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; and (3) 'a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the

Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.'

Can the last of these essentials, it is asked, be secured on any other basis than that of episcopacy and episcopal ordination? This is not said in order to call in question for a moment the 'spiritual reality' of ministries not having episcopal ordination. Moreover, it is proposed that episcopacy should be exercised in a representative and constitutional manner. But 'the truly equitable approach to union is by the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences.' So, to this end, the Anglican Bishops and clergy, if terms of union were otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, would willingly accept from the authorities of other communions 'a form of commission or recognition,' the hope being expressed that 'the same motive would lead ministers who have not received it, to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship.' This would not mean that any man should be taken 'to repudiate his past ministry'; it would be the public and formal seeking of 'additional recognition' for wider service in a reunited Church.

Certain directions or counsels are given (in Resolutions accompanying the Appeal) as to the *interim* stage while this scheme is in process of coming into existence. Approval cannot be given to general interchange of pulpits or intercommunion. There may be, however, 'occasional authorization' to ministers, not episcopally ordained, to preach, if the bishop considers that they are 'working towards' an ideal of union such as that described in the Appeal. And the Bishops 'will not question' the action of any of their number who, 'in the few years between the initiation and the completion of a definite scheme of union,' shall 'countenance the irregularity of admitting to Communion the baptized but unconfirmed communicants of the non-

episcopal congregations concerned in the scheme.' These and other limitations are explained (in the *Sub-Committee's Report on Reunion with Non-Episcopal Churches*) as due to the conviction that a wider policy would 'obscure our ideal and hinder its fulfilment,' and also impair the 'enthusiastic unanimity' of its support within the Anglican communion.

The above is a brief but, we trust, an impartial and accurate reading of the Lambeth scheme as set forth in the Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with the accompanying Resolutions and Reports. We do not here enter into those parts of these documents which refer more particularly to the Roman, the Eastern, and other episcopal communions, though they have an important bearing alike on the form and on the contents of the Appeal.

III

Before proceeding to any statement of our position as regards the actual proposals in this scheme, we desire to put in the forefront the expression of our ready and whole-hearted response to the idea underlying it. This is, as has been said, the idea of fellowship. We believe that Christian people to-day are earnestly seeking more and closer Christian fellowship; it appeals to their minds, to their hearts, to their consciences. We feel that the religious separations and alienations often made by our ecclesiastical divisions contradict the whole thought of the Church of Christ which is His Body. We have one Saviour, one Master, one Lord. We all owe everything to Him. If we all love Him, we should together love Him; if we are all His servants, we should serve Him together. Therefore, with all our heart we long for and shall welcome religious fellowship with our brethren in Christ Jesus.

We not only say this, but also desire to act in the spirit of it. We gladly join with our Anglican fellow Christians—

and indeed with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity—not only in social and civic work, but also in common worship and in any form of religious fellowship which is open to us. And we must add that we desire with sincere longing, as the supreme expression of Christian fellowship, the meeting together in the Holy Communion at that Table which, we must ever remind ourselves, does not belong to any of our churches, but is His, where He alone presides and to which He alone invites. We are aware that many of our Anglican brethren cannot see their way to meet us here. But our respect for their sincere conviction must not keep us from declaring ours, that the Lord's Table, because it is the Lord's, must, in the non-episcopal churches we represent, be open to our Anglican brethren, as to other fellow Christians, and that our religious fellowship will never be expressed as Christ means it to be till we meet in this most hallowed intercourse.

We do not dwell further on the call to fellowship except to add that it is not enough to enjoy this only among ourselves as churches. There is danger in the Church thinking of herself as her own end. We must labour to unite all Christian people together in the relationships of social and national life. Into this we cannot here enter; but it is a part of the ideal of the fellowship of Christ, and His Church should remember it and serve it.

To the idea of Church fellowship we shall return in the closing section of our statement.

IV

We now consider how and from what standpoint the Evangelical Free Churches of England should view this scheme and the practical proposals which it contains.

A movement towards union has, it seems to us, three stages; and these must be taken in order. There must be first of all the right spirit between churches—the spirit that

is brotherly and desires union, that is free alike from suspicion and from self-seeking, that is both penitent and prayerful. In recent years a large measure of this spirit has been attained between the conformist and non-conformist sections of English Christianity; and it has been increased by the whole tone of the Lambeth Appeal and by the courtesy and friendliness of many episcopalian brethren. The second stage is not a scheme of practical proposals. That comes third. Prior to that, there must be a real agreement on what we may call postulates—that is, vital principles regarding the Church, and, still more, regarding the Gospel. This second stage is, it seems to us, passed over rather slightly in the Lambeth documents. It is of vital principles or postulates for which the Evangelical Free Churches stand that we must now speak. This is not done in any ‘denominational’ spirit; the Appeal itself recognizes that all the communions concerned inherit what constitutes for them a sacred trust. Moreover, that of which we shall chiefly speak is not denominational, but simply Christian.

Our very name implies the positions on which we stand. We are *Churches*—claiming to be, in our corporate capacity, parts of the one Holy Catholic Church of Jesus Christ. We claim this, and cannot do less than claim it, because of our relation with Christ, who is the Head of the Body and who has recognized us and used us, not merely individually but corporately, for the ends of His Church. We are *Free Churches*—claiming liberty in all spiritual affairs that we may be free to listen to and obey Him whom we all acknowledge as our only Head. And we are *Evangelical Free Churches*. We use the word in no party sense. But there is, we believe, a definite New Testament Gospel, and this—which carries with it its conception of the Church—we cannot and dare not compromise for the sake even of union itself. This, indeed, is our supreme and, in a sense,

sole principle, for it contains the others: the Church is the outcome of the Gospel—hence the importance which has always been attached by evangelical churches to ‘the preaching of the Word’—and the Church thus made by the Gospel must be free.

What then, for us, is the Gospel? And what is the bearing of that Gospel on the conception of the Church? We desire to answer these questions simply and clearly.

In the Gospel, Christ is proclaimed as the Power and the Wisdom of God unto salvation. This salvation is essentially a personal relation of the soul to God—a relation which is immediate, and is constituted by grace on God’s part and by faith on man’s. Through this Gospel, the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in the hearts of those that believe; and this common possession of the Spirit creates a fellowship in which the humblest and loneliest Christian is a fellow-citizen with all the saints. This fellowship, which is the Church, gives visible expression to its corporate life in common faith, order, and worship; and to it belongs the vocation of witnessing for Christ and of winning the world for Him and thus bringing in the Kingdom of God.

The essentials of the Church are, therefore, in the Gospel, not in organization. The former is that by which the Church *is*: the latter is something which the Church *has*—and, of course, the more perfectly she has it, the better. We value the organizations and institutions of the visible Church, and we seek a conception of the Church as large and lofty as the New Testament offers; but we cannot allow any church order or rite, or even the idea of the Church taken by itself, to displace the Gospel as the regulative and—under the Divine Spirit—the creative principle of all ecclesiastical doctrine and practice.

The position above stated carries with it another. The Spirit being given of God to all who receive the Gospel of Christ, so that all may thereby have personal, direct, and

immediate access to God, the primary priesthood in Christ's Church is 'the priesthood of all believers.' But within this priesthood there are diversities of functions, constituted by differences in the gifts of the Spirit. Some of these are personal: some are representative of the whole Church. Pre-eminently representative is the ministry of the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel.

In these ministries, as everywhere and in everything that concerns the Church, we lay continual emphasis on the immediate and personal agency and sufficiency of Jesus Christ. He is not merely the Founder of a society, or the Source of a succession, or the Institutor of ordinances; but it is He Himself who always brings pardon and newness of life and growth and perfecting to His people, and who still is to His Church her living Lord and present Head.

The foregoing sentences express, in few words, the general character of what we believe to be the Gospel of the New Testament and its bearing on the idea of the Church and her ministry. These positions are not remote from the practical issues raised by the proposals in the Lambeth scheme. They are principles by which, for us, these issues must be determined. It is in the light of these evangelical principles regarding the Gospel and the Church that we pass to consider certain of the questions thus presented to us.

V

We have already clearly said that the present statement is not a reply to the Lambeth proposals. That must be made by the churches to which they are addressed. Therefore we desire to refrain here from direct criticism. Our duty is not to controvert, but rather to elucidate. It is with this limited and non-controversial purpose that we now touch on what seem to us to be the three important elements in the Lambeth scheme which need to be examined with

18 *The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal*

care in view of the general conceptions we have briefly indicated. The matters we shall look at are these :

- (1) THE RECOGNITION OF CHURCHES.
- (2) EPISCOPAL ORINATION, as proposed in the scheme.
- (3) THE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM OF THE CHURCH.

Other points might easily be suggested: but, for our present purpose, it will be sufficient if we refer to each of these three.

I. RECOGNITION OF CHURCHES

The evangelical conception of the Church of Christ, involving the position that the essential of the Church (or of any branch thereof) is in its relation to the Gospel and not in anything of outward organization, raises a question which concerns the relation of Anglicanism to ourselves and also our relation to others.

About the recognition or non-recognition on the part of Anglicanism of the churches we represent as, in their corporate character, parts of the one Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have little to say merely on our own account. It is to their Master that churches, as individuals, stand or fall. We shall only remark that, in our unanimous opinion, without the cordial and practical recognition of one another's church standing, proposals for union cannot be carried out and, indeed, can hardly with propriety be suggested.

But it is in respect of our relations with others that this question has for us a vital interest. Our members are it must be remembered, in a wider and larger Church fellowship than Anglicanism is. The true sign of Church fellowship is the communion of the Holy Table. A Congregationalist, for example, is in this fellowship not only with Congregationalists, but also (because there exists mutual recognition) with Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and

others. An Anglican, for reasons we do not here discuss, is not countenanced in seeking this wider fellowship; and his fellow communicants are limited to fellow Anglicans. The result is that when a Congregationalist passes from his communion to Anglicanism, he passes into a smaller Church fellowship, if he were held to cut himself off from his former company of fellow communicants.

This raises for us an issue which is a most practical one. Even on a sanguine view, it is hardly to be supposed that all, or the greater part, of non-episcopal Christendom—in, for example, Scotland or America—will enter at once within the Lambeth scheme of episcopacy. If we, in England, should accept it, would this mean we should no longer be in fullest sacramental communion with any of those whom we now welcome to our pulpits and with whom we join in the celebration of the Lord's Supper? If we should not continue to be in such fellowship with them, we should be committing schism—and a treacherous kind of schism—in the very act of union. If we should continue to be in such full communion, that would mean 'recognition.'

What our churches will desire, therefore, to know is this—whether Anglicanism is prepared to recognize non-episcopal communions (or any of them) as corporate parts of the Church of Christ, and their ministries as ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments. As we read the Lambeth Appeal, it logically implies—particularly by its recognition of our ministries as 'effective ministries of grace,' and its use of the words 'all ministries of grace, theirs and ours'—that our communions, like episcopal communions, are already parts of the visible Church of Christ. But, if this be the correct interpretation of the Appeal, it should be made clear that it is so.

Essentially and ultimately, the question is one of what the Living Lord, through His Spirit, says of the churches. We, for our part, must recognize churches and ministries which

manifestly He recognizes : and recognize them not merely in a general way as blessed of Him, but as churches and as ministries of the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel if He does so. We find it quite compatible with this to adhere firmly to what we may believe to be true and scriptural polity, and to decline to treat with indifference what may seem to us to be erroneous or defective in other systems. But the mind of Christ, expressed through the action of His Spirit, must be the Church's guiding rule in this question of recognition as in any other. For this reason, we must not be asked to take any step which would prevent or hamper our continued recognition of sister-churches with which we are at present in sacramental fellowship. We desire to say no word which would make agreement here difficult. But we are certain that the churches which we represent will require a perfectly clear understanding on this most practical issue of recognition—alike of ourselves on the part of Anglicanism, and of others by a re-united Church—and we trust that the answer may be made unmistakable by being given in word and in act.

2. EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

A second issue, which is raised for us in the Lambeth scheme, concerns episcopacy, especially in connexion with ordination.

Of episcopacy as a form of ecclesiastical polity we need say only a word. We have indicated that our view of the Gospel and of the Church keeps us from regarding any one form of polity as essential in the Church Catholic or in any true part of it. We hold—as leading Anglican scholars also hold—that no one form of polity for the Church has been prescribed by the Lord. For this very reason we are the more free to consider what form may be shown to us by the leading of the Spirit as expedient for a reunited Church,

and we, therefore, have an open mind towards episcopal order as towards any other. To this, however, we must add that we cannot be expected to consider any form of polity which claims to be an exclusive channel of grace or which fails to recognize the place and the rights of the Christian people in the affairs of the Church.

These are points, however, into which we need not at present enter further. The question which calls for special examination arises over the proposal of 'episcopal ordination.'

We venture to draw attention to one point. The proposal to make episcopal ordination of ministers who have not received it a part of a scheme of union is in direct opposition to the considered decision of the resolutions of the Mansfield Conference of 1920.¹ That Conference definitely put aside the suggestion of episcopal ordination (which was made to it by an episcopal member), and substituted the declaration that any mutual authorization was to be 'not re-ordination.' We, of course, attach no undue authority to this declaration, but it was signed by a number of representative Free Churchmen (as well as by many Anglicans), and there can be little question that it represents the practically unanimous Free Church view. We feel, therefore, that the obligation rests on those who set episcopal ordination—particularly in its Anglican form, which is not accepted by the majority of Episcopalians—in the forefront of a scheme of union, to bring forward exceptionally cogent grounds for doing so, if they are to win the support of the Free Churches.

In the Lambeth scheme episcopal ordination is introduced as an element in a scheme of mutual ministerial recognition. Its significance and purport in this connexion are not quite clear to us. When it is proposed that episcopalian clergy

¹ See *Documents bearing on the Problem of Christian Unity and Fellowship 1916-1920* (S.P.C.K.), pp. 83, 84.

should be authorized to officiate in Free Churches through 'a form of commission or recognition' which would 'commend' their ministry to these congregations, and that Free Church ministers should be authorized to officiate in Anglican congregations by 'a commission through episcopal ordination,' what is meant by this last crucial phrase? Is it meant that our ministers should be made 'ministers in the Church of God,' as the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer phrases it? Or is it meant that, being already 'ministers in the Church of God,' they are to be formally admitted and authorized to minister within the Church of England? If the former be the meaning, we obviously are thrown back again on the question of recognition. We should not be asked to accept any form which carries, or which could be construed to carry, this interpretation. If, on the other hand, the latter meaning be what is proposed, then certainly ordination is not the requisite or appropriate ceremony or word. Ordination to minister Christ's Word and Sacraments is a general thing, to be given once for all; licence to exercise it in any district or communion is a particular thing which may, of course, be extended. But the two things are different in idea. We are of opinion that the ambiguity here should be cleared up. It is possible, indeed, that we may be told that it is better not to press for its being cleared up, and that the meaning may be left to various, even contrary constructions. This does not commend itself to us either intellectually or ethically. To begin to build a union in the Church of Christ on a conscious ambiguity is not, it seems to us, to build in God's name and in God's way. Whether the Free Churches may find themselves able to accept this proposal of 'commission through episcopal ordination' or not, they can hardly be expected to accept it—and they certainly should not accept it—without knowing quite clearly what it means.

We do not think it necessary or expedient to pursue these

issues further. We shall add that the whole question about episcopacy, especially about the indispensableness of episcopal ordination, will never be settled by either side appealing merely to its ecclesiastical tradition. Nor, we must remark, can it be approached (as the Lambeth Appeal at this point suggests) merely by 'the way of mutual deference to one another's consciences.' This may be the right and Christian course in many secondary matters; but it cannot be made a guiding principle for large issues in Christ's Church. If it had been so regarded at the Council of Jerusalem, then St. Paul should have deferred to the doubtless often conscientious demands of the Judaizers. Our appeal must be to the Lord of all our consciences, and to His Spirit whose mind is to be discerned from what He does. We declare our readiness alike to learn and—what is more difficult—to unlearn, according to what He manifests to be His will as His Spirit works among the churches.

3. SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

The third matter which seems to require mention as arising out of our principles concerning the Gospel and the Church is the Spiritual Freedom of the Church of Christ.

In general terms, what we mean by the Spiritual Freedom of the Church is this. It is to the corporate life of the Christian Church what freedom of conscience is to the Christian man. The Christian man claims liberty of conscience in matters of religious faith and moral duty that he may learn of and obey his Lord. In the same way, the Church must be free in matters of religious faith and moral duty to learn of and to obey the Lord, who is still living and present in her midst. This is the meaning of the Spiritual Freedom of the Church; and it arises directly out of the principles regarding the Gospel and the Church which we have, in the previous section, laid down.

The Lambeth scheme suggests questions which concern this freedom in two main respects. One is the matter of the relation of the Church to the Creeds; the other is the relation of the Church to the State.

With regard to the former, we believe that there need be little difficulty. We recognize that the reunited Church will require some common declaration of faith, not to be used as a test, but to be a testimony and witness to the Lord and the Gospel. Here we fully realize the value of the ancient creeds. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches has, in its published *Declaratory Statement of Common Faith and Practice*, said that these Churches 'claim and cherish their place as inheritors, along with others, of the historic faith of Christendom, which found expression in the oecumenical creeds of the early and undivided church.' We are convinced, therefore, that Free Churchmen generally would be able to give as 'whole-hearted' an acceptance to the Christian faith underlying these creeds as do their Anglican brethren; while, as to the Nicene Creed in particular, such Free Churchmen as are acquainted with the history of doctrinal development in the fourth century can recognize in it 'a sufficient statement of the Christian faith' expressed in the terms of the thought of that age. While, however, recognizing all this, we are concerned also to maintain that truth is ever learning new language, so that terms and modes of thought grow old, and, when they have grown old, easily misinterpret and mislead. While reverencing the traditions of the past, we must keep our minds free to learn of the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide the Church in truth as in duty and who, we believe, has yet more light to break forth from His Word.

As regards the bearing of the question of Spiritual Freedom on the relations between the Church and the State, all that it is necessary to say here is that the Lambeth proposals for reunion no less than our principles concerning

the Gospel and the Church imply great changes in these relations in England. These need not be discussed at this stage. It is enough if we say that Free Churchmen cannot be asked to consent that the civil power—which, within its own sphere, is called to be the servant of God—has any authority over the spiritual affairs of the Church; or, further, to accept any position which would involve injustice or violate the rights of conscience.

We close what we say on the subject of freedom with a word of agreement. We heartily welcome the intention, evident in the Lambeth proposals, that ample liberty should be preserved with regard to forms of worship and much else which is distinctive of different 'groups.' (This liberty would extend to the practice of some amongst us as regards the subjects of Baptism.) We believe that in a reunited Church such liberty would vindicate itself, and that the forms of worship and service eventually surviving would be those approved by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ as most suited to the fullest life of His Body, the Church.

In thus calling attention to the above issues as, in our judgement, important for any candid and adequate consideration of the Lambeth proposals, we must again state that we are addressing our own people, not entering into controversy with others. Further, even where our remarks are negative in form—as necessarily they must be in part, if the scheme is to be tested by what we hold as the New Testament view of the Gospel and the Church—still we hope that our positive motive is not only present but apparent. The spirit should be more than the letter; and the spirit of the Lambeth Appeal is such a new thing in the relations of conformist to non-conformist Christianity in our land that we must not lose sight of it even in the necessary scrutiny of details. If the right spirit prevails among us all, it may lead us through difficulties which at present seem impassable and may bring into view new proposals not yet upon the horizon. It is with this aim,

and certainly with no intention of closing any doors, that we have made the comments which we have felt it our duty to make on certain points which we think the Free Churches must, in faithfulness to their principles, carefully consider, and, if we have spoken of these with frankness, may we add that we would be the first to recognize that there are also points which our Anglican brethren must, in faithfulness to their principles, consider not less carefully, and we hope they will state these not less frankly? But having said all this, we shall now end our statement on a more positive note, and say what we can to help towards the great ends we all have at heart.

VI

The Lambeth Appeal has set before us a 'vision.' It is that of a 'Church genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christians, within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage of the past to the present, shall be possessed in common and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ.' In this great and lofty conception, we share with profound sympathy; and we recognize in the appeal to seek its realization the accents of our Lord's voice which we cannot disregard. In saying this, we, of course, are not to be held as committing ourselves to any particular form of corporate union. But that all who name the Name of Christ should be united—and that visibly—is a Christian ideal, which we would pursue with all who will seek with us to learn and carry out His will regarding it.

This so great end cannot be attained except under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Along what lines the Spirit may ultimately lead the churches, we cannot determine, and at present do not presume even to anticipate. But such steps as are clear and immediate we are called on to take at once. Our vision implies it, for an ideal ceases to be an

ideal if nothing can be done towards its realization. The hope of the future involves the duty of the present. In these first steps, even though they may seem small, we must be guided, not by our own ecclesiastical predilections, but by what the Holy Spirit seems to indicate and countenance. We must refer everything about union—even the simplest steps—seriously and earnestly to Him. We therefore ask ourselves this question—What are the things which the Lord is making clear to us as our present duty in the relationship between the churches, and in doing which we should be following what, through the action of the Spirit, He Himself seems to do? May we answer this question out of our own experience and the experience of the churches to which we belong?

First, we have been finding more and more—largely through the ‘interchange of pulpits’—how the various communions of the Evangelical Free Churches are at one with each other in the *Gospel* of our common Lord and Saviour. Secondly, from the consciousness of the possession of the same Gospel, we have been led naturally and inevitably to ‘inter-communion’—to that supreme expression and seal of the Gospel in the *Sacrament* which manifests the unity of Christians with one another as well as their oneness with Him. And, thirdly, from this Christian fellowship in Word and in Sacrament, we have been led and are continually being led farther into unity of *service*, and even towards corporate unity. The Kingdom of God at home and, still more, in foreign mission fields has known new life and power as the outcome of the measure of Christian fellowship to which we have attained by these simple and obvious steps in which God has guided us. Union itself has, in many places, assumed a practicability and even urgency which, in earlier times and before these steps were taken, seemed impossible.

We ask—Is it not possible that God would have a wider measure of such intercourse in the Word and Sacrament of

the Gospel and in the work of the Gospel in order to open the way to further unity and even to union, and to the more effectual service of His Kingdom? May He not be calling us to stand together in these things at once, that we may learn together in the fellowship of His Spirit thus created, what may be His will as to questions regarding the character and constitution of a reunited Church? Our observation is that the manifest action of His Spirit sanctions these steps, and our experience is that His blessing accompanies them. We believe that if to the readiness for evangelical and sacramental fellowship which the Free Churches have shown were added the sense of the value of visible unity which the Lambeth Appeal has so impressively presented, that would be a combination the possibilities of which for the cause of reunion, under God's blessing, are incalculable. Is this combination not attainable in England to-day?

We, therefore, on our part desire to set before ourselves anew the vision of the one visible Church Catholic of Christ; and if we have not always been moved by this in the past—to account for which many historical reasons might be given—all the more would we now think, labour, and pray for its realization. We ask our Anglican brethren, on their part, to welcome and to promote closer spiritual fellowship among the churches, especially through the pulpit, at the Communion Table, and in the work of the Kingdom. These may seem small things in face of the problem of reunion. They are not small if the Spirit of the Lord go with us in doing them; and that the Holy Spirit by His presence sanctions intercommunion, and, indeed, precedes us in every step we take towards it, seems to us—and we think must seem to any one looking impartially at the facts of Christendom—far more manifest than that He makes any particular form of order or polity essential in the Church. So we conclude that the immediate duty of the churches, in this high and sacred matter of reunion, is to unite in the fellowship of the Word and Sacrament of Christ's Gospel

and in the work of the Gospel at home and abroad; and we believe that His Spirit, who goes before us in these things, will go before us to yet greater things, and will lead us in the light of the Gospel, if thus together we proclaim and serve it, to learn the mind of Christ concerning His Church, which is one in Him.

We pray that the Holy Spirit may guide the churches in their decisions, and that grace may be with our brethren of every name in Christ Jesus.

4. *The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England*

RESOLUTIONS OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, SEPTEMBER 1921

The Federal Council recognizes that in any further conference on the subject the questions raised in the report¹ must be given a primary place with a view, in the language of the Archbishop, to clearing up certain expressions which may be felt to have an ambiguous character. But it desires to express its conviction that this question has now reached a stage when more than ever it is imperative that words of unity should be accompanied by acts of unity. It believes that the discussion would be materially aided if meantime acts of intercommunion and interchange of pulpits and other forms of concerted spiritual action were arranged between the Church of England and the Free Churches. The witness borne in the report to the effect that it is by such means that Church unity has been built up amongst the English Free Churches, has been confirmed by an identical witness from Scotland² where an important Church Union seems about to be consummated.

The Federal Council, having noted the suggestion of the

¹ i. e. No. 3 *supra*.

² See Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity 1920-4*, No. 48. *Church of Scotland Act, 1921*.

Bishops that a central conference should be held between representatives of Episcopal and non-Episcopal communions upon the whole subject of the Appeal, and further desiring explication of expressions in the Appeal which are felt to have an ambiguous character, hereby appoints the following with a view to such conference with the two Archbishops and with other members of the Church of England whom they may appoint :

¹Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D. (Moderator).

²Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.

³Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D.

⁴Sir Walter Essex.

²Rev. W. Y. Fullerton.

¹Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.

⁵Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A.

²Sir Alfred Pearce Gould, K.C.V.O., M.S.

¹Rev. A. J. Viner.

⁶Rev. S. Horton.

³Rev. H. Maldwyn Hughes, B.A., B.D.

³Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.

⁷Right Rev. Bishop Mumford.

⁴Rev. T. Nightingale.

⁶Prof. A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.

⁵Rev. Alex. Ramsay, D.D.

³Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman.

¹Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.

³Rev. J. Alfred Sharp.

⁵Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.

¹Right Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P.

⁴Rev. Henry Smith.

⁵Rev. W. Lewis Robertson, M.A., ³Rev. Walter H. Armstrong, and ²Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D., Secretaries.

¹ Congregational. ² Baptist. ³ Wesleyan. ⁴ United Methodist

⁵ Presbyterian. ⁶ Primitive Methodist. ⁷ Moravian.

5. *Church Unity*

BEING THE REPORT OF A JOINT CONFERENCE HELD AT
LAMBETH PALACE, TOGETHER WITH A PRELIMINARY
STATEMENT BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND
YORK AND THE MODERATOR OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF
THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES

MAY 1922

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The time has, in our opinion, come when it is desirable that information should be made public as to the present outcome in this country of the 'Appeal to All Christian People,' which was issued nearly two years ago by the Bishops attending the Lambeth Conference of 1920.

The Appeal was transmitted by the Archbishop of Canterbury in August 1920 to the different Christian Churches at home and abroad. On September 28, 1920, a provisional statement in reply was issued by the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England at their annual meeting, and was endorsed by the National Free Church Council. In April 1921, a fuller statement from the same source was published under the title, 'The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal,' and in September 1921, as the result of detailed examination and discussion, the following resolution was passed:

'The Federal Council, having noted the suggestion of the Bishops that a central conference should be held between representatives of Episcopal and non-Episcopal communions upon the whole subject of the Appeal, and further desiring explication of expressions in the Appeal which are felt to have an ambiguous character, hereby appoints the following with a view to such conference with the two Archbishops and with other members of the Church of

England whom they may appoint : *Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D. (Moderator); Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.; Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D.; Sir Walter Essex; Rev. W. Y. Fullerton; *Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.; Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A.; Sir Alfred Pearce Gould, K.C.V.O., M.S.; Rev. A. J. Viner; Rev. S. Horton; Rev. H. Maldwyn Hughes, B.A., B.D.; *Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.; Right Rev. Bishop Mumford; Rev. T. Nightingale; *Professor A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.; Rev. Alex. Ramsay, D.D.; Right Hon. Walter Runciman; Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.; Rev. J. Alfred Sharp; *Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.; Right Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P.; Rev. Henry Smith; Rev. W. Lewis Robertson, M.A., Rev. Walter H. Armstrong, and *Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D., Secretaries.'

With a view to the desired Conferences, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York nominated as representatives of the Church of England the Archbishop of Canterbury, *the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Winchester, *Gloucester, Ely, Lichfield, *Peterborough, Chelmsford, Hereford, and *Ripon. *The Bishop of Salisbury was subsequently added, together with *Dr. Headlam, Regius Professor of Divinity of Oxford, and *Dr. Walter Frere.

On November 30, 1921, the Conference met at Lambeth Palace under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and after prolonged discussion appointed a committee of thirteen persons (six Church of England and six Free Churchmen) to consider, under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of York, some of the issues involving large questions of principle which had been raised during the Conference. The names of those who formed the committee are marked with an asterisk in the foregoing lists. This committee held prolonged meetings in Lambeth Palace in January, March, and April 1922, giving consideration chiefly to the three following subjects: (1) The nature of the

Church; (2) The nature of the Ministry; (3) The place of Creeds in a United Church. The committee ultimately decided to present their report in the form of a series of propositions to which they had unanimously agreed. The Conference met at Lambeth Palace on May 24, 1922, to receive the report. The report was considered, and after full discussion the Conference unanimously gave its general approval to the several propositions in the form printed below.

The report must be submitted to the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, at whose request the Conference was arranged. But the members of the Conference who represent that Council concurred with the representatives of the Church of England in deciding that, without prejudice to any decision of the Council, the report should at once be made public for the information of the Churches represented in the Conference and of all Christian people. It will be understood that the propositions which the report contains are not intended as a complete statement of the great subjects with which they deal; nor even as expressing what individual members of the Conference or the Churches which they represent might regard as a full statement of their own positions. They are submitted simply as expressing substantially the very large measure of agreement which, after full and frank discussion, the Conference had been enabled to reach.

It is obvious that many matters of great importance are not dealt with in this interim report. These must be the subject of future discussion. But the members of the Conference hope that the agreement which they have so far reached may prove to be a basis upon which, by God's help, further agreement leading to practical action may be built. Meanwhile, we would earnestly press upon all who have this great matter at heart that they should remember steadily, both in public and private prayer, the possibilities

which, as we believe, God is opening to our view, in firm assurance that He will, in His own good time, show us the manner of their accomplishment.

RANDALL CANTUAR :

COSMO EBOR :

J. D. JONES, *Moderator of the*

May 29, 1922.

Federal Council.

THE REPORT AS ACCEPTED BY THE CONFERENCE

I. ON THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

1. The foundation of the Church rests not upon the will or consent or beliefs of men, whether as individuals or as societies, but upon the creative Will of God.

2. The Church is the Body of Christ, and its constitutive principle is Christ Himself, living in His members through His Spirit.

3. As there is but one Christ, and one Life in Him, so there is and can be but one Church.

4. This one Church consists of all those who have been, or are being, redeemed by and in Christ, whether in this world or in the world beyond our sight, but it has its expression in this world in a visible form. Yet the Church, as invisible and as visible, is, by virtue of its one life in Christ, one.

5. This visible Church was instituted by Christ as a fellowship of men united with Him, and in Him with one another, to be His witness and His instrument in the spread of His Kingdom on earth.

6. As a visible Church it must possess certain visible and recognizable marks whereby it can be seen and known by men. These have been since the days of the Apostles at least the following : (a) The profession of faith in God as revealed and incarnate in Christ ; (b) the observance of the

two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself; (c) an ideal of the Christian life protected by a common discipline; (d) a ministry, representative of the Church, for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the maintenance of the unity and continuity of the Church's witness and work. (See II, 1.)

7. Baptism is by the ordinance of Christ and of His Apostles the outward and visible sign of admission into membership of the Church.

8. The Church visible on earth ought to express and manifest to the world by its own visible unity the one Life in Christ of the one Body.

9. The true relation of the Church and local Churches is that which is described in the New Testament—namely, that the Churches are the local representatives of the One Church. The actual situation brought about in the course of history in which there are different and even rival denominational Churches independent of each other and existing together in the same locality, whatever justification arising out of historical circumstances may be claimed for these temporary separations, cannot be regarded as in accordance with the Purpose of Christ, and every endeavour ought to be made to restore the true position as set forth in the New Testament.

10. The marks which ought to characterize the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgements, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered

society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgement can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God.

II. THE MINISTRY

1. A ministry of the Word and Sacrament is a Divine ordinance for the Church, and has been since the days of the Apostles an integral part of its organized life.

2. It is a ministry within the Church exercising representatively, in the Name and by the authority of the Lord Who is the Head of the Church, the powers and functions which are inherent in the Church.

3. It is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof.

4. No man can take this ministry upon himself. It must be conferred by the Church, acting through those who have authority given to them in the Church to confer it. There must be not only an inward call of the Spirit, but also an outward and visible call and commission by the Church.

5. It is in accordance with Apostolic practice and the ancient custom of the Church that this commission should be given through Ordination, with prayer and the laying on of hands by those who have authority given to them to ordain.

6. We believe that in Ordination, together with this commission to minister, Divine Grace is given through the Holy Spirit in response to prayer and faith for the fulfilment of the charge so committed.

7. Within the many Christian Communion into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of these several Communion and their beliefs as to

the Mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These various ministries of Word and Sacrament have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of 'enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints.' But the differences which have arisen with regard to the authority and functions of these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions, and misunderstandings. For the allaying of doubts and scruples in the future, and for the more perfect realization of the truth that the ministry is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof, means should be provided for the United Church which we desire, whereby its ministry may be acknowledged by every part thereof as possessing the authority of the whole body.

8. In view of the fact that the Episcopate was from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christendom is still accepted, as the means whereby this authority of the whole body is given, we agree that it ought to be accepted as such for the United Church of the future.

9. Similarly, in view of the place which the Council of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful had in the constitution of the early Church, and the preservation of these elements of presbyteral and congregational order in large sections of Christendom, we agree that they should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church.

10. The acceptance of Episcopal Ordination for the future would not imply the acceptance of any particular theory as to its origin or character, or the disowning of past ministries of Word and Sacrament otherwise received, which have, together with those received by Episcopal Ordination, been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.

III. THE PLACE OF THE CREED IN A UNITED CHURCH

1. In a united Church there must be unity of Faith, which implies both the subjective element of personal adhesion and an objective standard of truth.

2. The supreme standard of truth is the revelation of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as summed up in Jesus Christ.

3. As the Church in its corporate capacity confesses Christ before men, there should be in the United Church a formal statement of its corporate faith in Christ as an expression of what is intellectually implied by its confession of Him.

4. The Creed commonly called Nicene should be accepted by the United Church as the sufficient statement of this corporate faith. The manner and occasions in which the Creed is to be used should be determined by the United Church.

5. With regard to a confession of faith at Baptism, the United Church would be justified in using the Creed which has been for centuries the Baptismal Creed of the Western Church, commonly called the Apostles' Creed. Its use at Baptism would imply recognition of the corporate faith of the Church therein expressed as the guide and inspiration of the Christian life.

6. The use of the Creeds liturgically in the public worship of the Church should be regarded as an expression of corporate faith and allegiance; and the United Church should be prepared to recognize diversities of use in this as in other liturgical customs.

7. When assent to the Creeds is required by the United Church, such assent should not be understood to imply the acceptance of them as a complete expression of the Christian Faith, or as excluding reasonable liberty of interpretation. It should be understood to imply the acceptance of them as agreeable to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, as affirming essential elements in the

Christian Faith, and as preserving that Faith in the form in which it has been handed down through many centuries in the history of the Christian Church.

8. While we thus recognize the rightful place of the Creeds in the United Church, we also recognize most fully and thankfully the continued Presence and Teaching of the Living Spirit in His Body, and emphasize the duty of the Church to keep its mind free and ready to receive from Him in each day and generation ever-renewed guidance in the apprehension and expression of the truth.

6. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 18-20, 1922

I. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England receives the Report concerning Unity, which embodies the provisional statement adopted by the Joint Conference of representatives of the Church of England and the Evangelical Free Churches meeting at Lambeth, and it records its thanks to its members who have taken part in these deliberations.

II. The Council, in receiving the Report of the Conference, would point out that it was not charged by its constituent denominations with the preparation of a scheme of reunion, but simply to inquire into the conditions antecedent thereto; and further, it must be understood that this is an Interim Report, of a preliminary and introductory character. The formal pronouncement on any scheme of union or proposals thereon would at the proper time fall to the authoritative assemblies or courts of the various Churches concerned and would properly arise on an official approach by the Church of England itself. The Council, however, desires to place

on record the following findings regarding its main propositions.

- (a) We welcome the statements which declare the essentially spiritual character of the Church of Christ, as having its 'constitutive principle' in 'Christ Himself, living in His members through His Spirit,' and as comprehending 'all those who have been or are being redeemed by and in Christ.' We regard this as meaning that no true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in whom is the one indispensable condition of salvation, are to be held as being outside the Church, whatever institutional rites or forms for the orderly expression of membership it may be right to maintain in the visible Church.
- (b) We appreciate the association for the first time, in a document of the character of the Joint Report, of presbyteral and congregational order along with episcopal. We are of the opinion that the combination of all these elements is the only possible basis of polity for a reunited Church.
- (c) We heartily approve of the place assigned to the revelation of God given in the Bible and 'summed up in Jesus Christ,' as the 'Supreme Standard of Truth,' and also of the 'full and thankful' recognition of 'the continued Presence and Teaching of the Living Spirit' in the Church, which is to receive from Him 'ever renewed guidance in the apprehension and expression of the truth.' We regard the place given to the two ancient catholic creeds as thus subordinate to the inspired Word and living Spirit; and these creeds are received not as a complete expression of the faith, but as preserving 'essential elements' in it 'in the form handed down through many centuries,' and with reasonable liberty as to their

interpretation and their use. We hold as not only consistent with this, but as implied in it, alike the fullest freedom in the intellectual investigation of Truth and the most single-hearted discipleship to the Mind of Christ.

III. The Council is well aware that there are practical difficulties which yet remain to be considered, and, in particular,

1. What is meant by a 'representative and constitutional' episcopate, and how the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with it; /
2. The Status of the existing Free Church ministry;
3. The relation of the Free Churches to Communion with which they are in fellowship in other parts of the world;
4. The problems connected with the union between Church and State;
5. The safe-guarding of the evangelical principles of the Reformation.

The Federal Council, while earnestly continuing to seek the things of charity and unity, is resolved in no way to imperil either the evangel or the freedom which are the heritage of the Churches it represents.

IV. The Council, while greatly valuing conference with brethren of the Anglican Church over such matters of doctrine and polity as those discussed in this Report, thinks it needful to reaffirm declarations already made more than once on two points, viz. :

- (a) That a primary question in any negotiations concerning unity is whether the Churches engaged in them are prepared to recognize one another as Churches—parts, in their corporate capacity, of the one Church of the Lord Jesus Christ;

- (b) That discussion of union should be increasingly accompanied by acts of unity between these Churches.

The Council rejoices in the growing spirit of fellowship between the Churches, but is of opinion that in the true interests of unity the time has come when a clear understanding on these points should be sought for by those who represent it in these conferences.

V. The Council reappoints the Committee as follows :

Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D. (Moderator).

Rev. S. M. Berry, M.A.

Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.

Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D.

Rev. J. C. Carlile, C.B.E., D.D.

Sir Walter Essex.

Rev. W. Y. Fullerton.

Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.

Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., D.C.L.

Rev. S. Horton.

Rev. H. Maldwyn Hughes, B.A., D.D.

Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.

Mr. Herbert Marnham.

Bishop H. R. Mumford.

Rev. T. Nightingale.

Prof. A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Alexander Ramsay, M.A., D.D.

Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman.

Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.

Rev. J. Alfred Sharp.

Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Henry Smith.

Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P.

Rev. F. L. Wiseman, B.A.

Rev. Thomas Yates.

Rev. Walter H. Armstrong.

Rev. W. L. Robertson, M.A.

• Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D.

And it commends the whole matter, so fraught with great issues for the future of religion in our land and throughout the world, to the interest and prayers of all Christian people.

The following Sub-Committee for Special Conferences at Lambeth was appointed :

Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.

Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.

Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.

Prof. A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.

Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.

Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D.

It was agreed to sanction the publication of these Resolutions and their transmission to the Secretaries of the Denominations represented in the Council.

7. A Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry

PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
REPRESENTATIVES ON THE JOINT CONFERENCE AT
LAMBETH PALACE, JULY 6, 1923

[The Church of England Representatives on the Joint Conference were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of London (Dr. Winnington-Ingram), Winchester (Dr. Talbot), Ely (Dr. Chase), Lichfield (Dr. Kempthorne), Peterborough (Dr. Woods), Chelmsford (Dr. Watts-Ditchfield), Hereford (Dr. Linton-Smith), Ripon (Dr. Strong), Salisbury (Dr. Donaldson), Gloucester (Dr. Headlam), Bishop Gibson, and the Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D.]

The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England at its meeting in September, 1922, received the

report of the Joint Conference held at Lambeth Palace, and reappointed its committee and sub-committee to continue the conferences. In so doing, in Paragraph III of its report, the council mentioned certain 'practical difficulties which yet remain to be considered.' Among them was 'the status of the existing Free Church ministry.' Accordingly the sub-committee proceeded to give long and full consideration to this subject, and we who represent the Church of England have been asked to submit a memorandum upon it.

It will be remembered that the main object of the conferences which have been held has been to elucidate the Appeal of the Lambeth Conference to all Christian people. Whatever wishes or opinions we who submit this memorandum may individually have, we consider ourselves bound by that Appeal and not entitled to go beyond its statements, or what in our judgement may be legitimately inferred from them. Further, our memorandum cannot be regarded as an official interpretation of the Appeal. The responsibility for what is contained in it is limited to those who present it.

We are compelled to say at the outset that our difficulty in discussing the status of the Free Church ministry has been to discover accurately what the term includes and implies, whether the phrase represents any accepted unity as to the principles which underlie this ministry, or as to the manner in which it is conferred. We do indeed most thankfully acknowledge that the Free Church members of our committee agreed with us in the statement of principles with regard to the ministry of Christ's Church, which were set forth in our first report (II. 1-6). But the very full, frank, and friendly conferences which we have had together made it plain that in fact within the Free Churches there have been and are very varying traditions and conceptions as to the nature of the ministry, and as to the meaning of Ordination, and very varying customs as to the manner in which Ordination is conferred and ministers are accredited.

For example, to mention only one of these differences, although in our first report it was agreed (II. 5) that 'it is in accordance with Apostolic practice and the ancient custom of the Church, that the commission by the Church should be given through Ordination with prayer and laying on of hands by those who have authority given to them to ordain,' yet in fact several of the Free Churches have not used in the past and do not always now use the laying on of hands.

During our conferences we have been asked to consider Free Church ministries prospectively—from the point of view of the conceptions and usages in which they are increasingly ready to unite—rather than retrospectively—from the point of view of conceptions and usages which have been prevalent in the past. It is indeed a great satisfaction to think that the principles which we were able to set forth in our first report as agreed upon by us all are becoming more and more fully characteristic of the ministries of the Free Churches represented on our committee. But our difficulty is that we are specifically asked to write about the Free Church ministry as it exists. We trust that our Free Church brethren in the committee will generously appreciate the difficulty thus frankly expressed, and understand why it is not possible for us to give any single and unconditional answer to the question put before us.

In what follows in this memorandum it will be understood that we have in mind ministries, which in some real measure are given and exercised in accordance with the principles set forth in our first report—ministries which rest upon a long-established order, which have been conferred by some solemn and authoritative act implying Ordination to the ministry of the Universal Church and not merely commission to the ministry of a particular denomination, and which are regarded as involving a life-long vocation.

I

Such Free Church ministries we find it impossible to regard as 'invalid,' that is, as null and void, or as effecting none of the purposes for which the ministry has been Divinely ordained in the Church of Christ. Indeed, we wish that the terms 'valid' and 'invalid' could be discontinued, involving as they seem to do a knowledge of the Divine Will and purpose and grace which we do not possess, and which it would be presumption to claim.

But we consider that we are entitled, by manifest tokens of Divine blessing which these ministries possess, and also by the spirit and the terms of the Lambeth Appeal about them, to go further, and to say that we regard them as being within their several spheres real ministries in the Universal Church.

The Bishops, in the Lambeth Appeal, began by saying: 'We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity as sharing with us membership in the Universal Church of Christ, which is His Body.' And as to the ministries of those communions which do not possess the Episcopate, they say that they do not call in question for a moment the spiritual reality of these ministries, but, on the contrary, they thankfully acknowledge that these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace.

It seems to us to be in accordance with the Lambeth Appeal to say, as we are prepared to say, that the ministries which we have in view in this memorandum, ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the Church concerned, are real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church.

II

Yet ministries, even when so regarded, may be in varying degrees irregular or defective.

The committee has already agreed in regard to the now separate Churches that, 'even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's mind and purpose.' Such irregularities or defects may belong to the sphere of faith or discipline, and also to the sphere of ministry. There are some who consider our own ministry in one way or another defective or irregular. It is possible that even among the Free Churches themselves there may be ministries exercised by one which are regarded by another as in some respects, more or less important, irregular, or inadequate. In each case such judgements must be regarded as due to our several beliefs as to the mind and purpose of our Lord Himself for His Church and the continuous guidance of the Holy Spirit within the Church. The existence of these differences with regard to the authority and functions of the ministry, inevitable in the present divided condition of the Church, only increases our longing for a time when, in a united Church, they may be removed.

The belief and practice of the Anglican Church are set forth in the Preface to the Ordinal contained in the Book of Common Prayer, in which it is said 'that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons'; and that 'to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of *England*; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of *England*, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form

hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.'

Thus, the Anglican Church is bound to secure the authorization of its ministers for its own congregations, and no one could be authorized to exercise his ministry among them who had not been episcopally ordained.

It is not possible in this memorandum to set forth fully the reasons for this position. But it can be said :

1. We regard the rule quoted above as much more than a mere rule of internal discipline. It embodies principles to which the Anglican Church has throughout its history adhered, and which contribute to the special position which it claims to hold in the Christian Church.

2. We cannot lose sight of the relations in which we stand to other Episcopal Churches in East and West ; nor can we ignore the danger of creating pain and disturbance, or even the possibility of schism, within our own communion if the rule and principle contained in the Ordinal were to be set aside.

III

In the last section we have stated our position with the frankness which has been characteristic of our conferences. But we hope that what we have there said will be viewed, as regards the present, in conjunction with what we have said in the preceding section as to the character of some at least of the Free Church ministries as real ministries of the Word and Sacrament ; and, as regards the future, in conjunction with what was said in the first report of the committee (II. 8, 9).¹ We have there recognized that these ministries have a value of their own as standing for elements of Presbyterian and Congregational order which should be maintained with the Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church. We desire that in

¹ See No. 5, p. 37.

the episcopal ordinations of the future these elements should in some real way be represented so that both our traditions and those of the Free Churches should contribute to the fullness of the future ministry of a United Church.

Moreover, we see in the movements towards union, of which our conferences have been a happy and hopeful sign, that a new situation is being created which calls for new ways in which the ministry of the Free Churches and our own may be brought into closer relations. For when circumstances arise which have no exact precedent a true principle of 'economy' entitles the Church to meet them with new methods. We may quote the words of the Committee on Reunion which submitted the Appeal and its accompanying Resolutions to the Lambeth Conference (Report, page 141) :

When men set their faces steadily towards the ideal of our Appeal and especially when negotiations for organic reunion are in progress, or, again, when a scheme of union has in any place been adopted, situations will arise in which we should all agree that new lines of action may be followed.

Thus (1) As regards the immediate present, here in England, the Convocations of Canterbury and York have endorsed the Resolution of the Lambeth Conference (12. A. [i]). 'A Bishop is justified in giving occasional authorization to ministers not episcopally ordained, who, in his judgement, are working towards an ideal of union such as is described in our Appeal, to preach in churches within his diocese, and to clergy of the diocese to preach in the churches of such ministers.' We earnestly hope that this Resolution will be followed by action in accordance with it. (2) As regards the future, if by God's blessing any of the Free Churches and the Anglican Church were to agree to unite on the basis of the acceptance of Episcopacy for the future, the Lambeth Conference (Resolution 12. A. [iii]) has given its approval

to the suggestions that ministers of both the uniting communions should at once be recognized as of equal status in the councils of the United Church, and that the terms of the union should include for the time being the right of non-episcopally ordained ministers to conduct services other than celebrations of the Holy Communion, and to preach in churches which possess an episcopal ministry, if licensed thereto by the Bishop. But the whole subject of the arrangements which should be made for the exercise of ministry by the ministers of one of the uniting Churches in the congregations of the others during the period between the time when the union has been inaugurated and the time when it would be completed by the ministries of all the Churches having one common source and authority, is one which demands further and very careful consideration. We do not think it necessary to discuss this subject in the present memorandum. If our conferences are continued and the subject were to be expressly referred to us, we would be prepared to consider it. It is plain that during this period of transition there would be many inevitable irregularities and difficulties and a constant need of patience, charity, and mutual considerateness. But there would also be the sustaining and encouraging knowledge that each year would bring the time nearer when union would be sealed by the possession of one ministry throughout the United Church.

IV

Finally, we would urge that it is in the light of this hope for the future rather than from the point of view of the difficulties of the present or of the provisions necessary for a time admittedly transitional that the problem of reunion must be considered. It is towards the fulfilment of this hope that we must direct our thought, our labours, and our prayers.

APPENDED NOTE

PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE FREE CHURCH
REPRESENTATIVES ON THE JOINT CONFERENCE ¹

The representatives of the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England on the sub-committee, having considered the document presented by the Anglican members as their reply to the question of the status of the existing Free Church ministries, desire to express their cordial appreciation of the spirit in which the reply is conceived. While recognizing that the responsibility for this answer must rest with the Anglican members, the representatives of the Federal Council desire to record their opinion that the document contains statements of such importance as amply to justify their hope that the Federal Council will reappoint the committee to unite with the representatives of the Church of England in further discussion of the many points that still remain to be considered.

8. *The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches*

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 18, 1923

I

The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England receives the report of its committee, which contains the memorandum on 'The Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry' by the Anglican members of the Joint

¹ The names of the Free Church representatives are given on pp. 42-43.

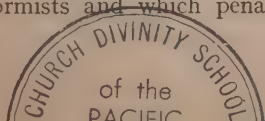
Conference meeting at Lambeth. The Council concurs with its representatives on the Joint Conference in expressing cordial appreciation of the spirit in which this memorandum is conceived, and it has given to it respectful and careful consideration. Believing that a direct communication of this character from the Anglican representatives calls for, and is entitled to, some definite statement as to the attitude of the Free Churches in respect to it, the Council makes the following comments on its main positions :

1. We cordially welcome the crucial declaration that ' the Ministries which we have in view in this memorandum — Ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the Church concerned — are real Ministries of Christ's Word and Sacrament in the Universal Church.' The Lambeth Appeal itself spoke in general terms of these ministries as having ' spiritual reality ' and as having been ' blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace.' It is now explicitly said of them (*a*) that they minister the Gospel of Christ ; (*b*) that they minister also the Sacraments ; and (*c*) that they are within the Universal or Catholic Church. If the recognition thus so unmistakably given in words were translated into unmistakable actions, a great and difficult problem in reunion would be within sight of practical solution.

2. We note, however, with regret that, in the succeeding section of the memorandum, not only is this recognition not followed by recommendations for appropriate action, but the plan contemplated and required for the exercise of a full ministry within the Anglican Church is precisely that plan which would be followed, and which is followed, in the case of persons possessing no kind of ministry — namely episcopal ordination. This means that what has just been conceded in the most satisfactory language is not to be given

effect to in practice. Any question—either on the part of the Anglican Church or of that of the Free Churches—of ‘irregular’ or of what may be regarded as ‘defective’ denominational commission is quite a different matter, to be dealt with in its own proper way; but that way certainly is not ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Church of Christ of a man already acknowledged to be in that ministry. All this seems to us manifest and even axiomatic; and we are unable to believe that the position which, at one moment, acknowledges that Free Church ministries are ‘real ministries of Christ’s Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church,’ and at the next requires nevertheless that those in them must be ordained to the ministry of that very Word of Christ and those very Sacraments of Christ—that such a position will be found one on which our Anglican brethren with consistency of thinking and acting can permanently stand.

3. We turn to the grounds of this insistence on episcopal ordination and we are referred to the Preface attached to the Ordinal in 1661, which laid it down that ‘no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest or Deacon in the Church of *England*, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions except he be called, tried, examined and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.’ We remark that this drastic rule, which applies to ‘any of the said Functions,’ is not strictly obeyed by the Church of England to-day as regards the function of preaching; and the Lambeth Conference of 1920—as the present memorandum reminds us—expressly countenances this exception in certain circumstances. This is but one indication that we are dealing to-day not with the Anglicanism of the Restoration, which deliberately desired to exclude Nonconformists and which penalized them, but



with the Anglicanism of the Lambeth Appeal, which earnestly seeks reunion and which approaches Non-conformity with friendship. But we should do injustice to our Anglican brethren who present this memorandum if we suggested that they grounded themselves merely on a clause from a preface inserted at a time more marked by controversy than by charity. They say that this preface 'embodies principles to which the Anglican Church has throughout its history adhered.' We submit that this is hardly accurate historically. It is well known that up to the time of this deliberately exclusive preface, there were ministering in the cures of the Church of England 'many'—it is Bishop Cosin's reckoning—who had not received episcopal ordination, and whom the Bishops did not reordain. We do not magnify these cases, which were, we admit, exceptional. But if the Church of England in the seventeenth century could receive ministers from certain reformed Churches without episcopal ordination and yet did not thereby lose its catholic identity, then it could and can—so far as principle goes—in the twentieth century admit, by some method other than ordination, those whom, despite their not having had episcopal hands laid upon them, it has just formally and fully recognized as being really in the ministry of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church. It could do it so far as any 'principles to which the Anglican Church has throughout its history adhered' are concerned. We ask no immediate or premature answer. We believe that God's guidance of us all in this matter has not ended, and that the last word on it has not been said on either side. We feel deeply that this age-long and difficult problem can be solved only by some great and worthy act, inspired by courage and vision, in which men and Churches are willing to take their lives in their hands for the sake of the realization of a great ideal.

II

The Federal Council makes the above comments on the memorandum which it has received in an entirely conciliatory spirit towards what it recognizes to be a friendly as well as a sincere statement. In the interests of union the representatives of the Free Churches have endeavoured to meet their Anglican brethren at every point so far as they could do so without sacrifice of vital principle. The question of ordination is the place where we look to the Anglican Church to meet their Free Church brethren. The Council has felt that, after three years of fruitful conference, it could express its mind on this subject, as it has done, with perfect frankness. The movement towards reunion has now passed the stage when it can be dealt with simply by discussion. We have come close to the crucial issues, and must deal with them with clearness, courage, and charity.

III

The Council adds that the recognition of Free Church ministries given in the memorandum which it has considered enforces the contention which the Council has more than once emphasized that the deliberations over union in Conferences and committees should be accompanied by practical action. Since Anglican clergy and Free Church ministers are in the one Universal Church, and are ministering the same Word and the same Sacraments, then, surely, there should be more of fellowship and co-operation than there is, even though the final difficulty about ordination be not yet surmounted. The Council feels the Union movement cannot—especially in the minds of the people—live entirely on private conferences and their reports; and it renews its declaration of last year that ‘the discussion of union should be increasingly accompanied by acts of unity between the Churches.’ It heartily

welcomes the references to this towards the close of the memorandum. And in this connexion it notes with warm appreciation the visits of the two Archbishops and some of the Bishops to the Free Church assemblies, and the presence of a number of Free Church preachers in Cathedral and other Anglican pulpits.

IV

The Council recognizes with deep gratitude the guidance and blessing of God in the course which the conferences have taken and the spirit by which they have been moulded. The way of reunion is not yet clear to any one of us. It is our part to seek a fuller understanding of one another in further conference and common prayer, believing that God's way will be revealed to us.

The Council reappoints the committee as follows :

Rev. Walter H. Armstrong.
Sir Ryland Adkins, K.C.
Rev. J. T. Barkby.
Rev. S. M. Berry, M.A.
Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.
Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D.
Rev. J. C. Carlile, C.B.E., D.D.
Sir Walter Essex.
Rev. W. Y. Fullerton.
Rev. A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D.
Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., D.C.L.
Rev. S. Horton.
Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., D.D.
Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., D.D.
Sir Henry Lunn, M.D.
Mr. Herbert Marnham.
Bishop H. R. Mumford.
Rev. T. Nightingale.
Prof. A. S. Peake, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Alexander Ramsay, M.A., D.D.

Rev. W. L. Robertson, M.A.

Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman.

Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., D.D.

Rev. W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.

Rev. J. Alfred Sharp.

Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A., D.D.

Rev. Henry Smith.

Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P.

Rev. F. L. Wiseman, B.A.

Rev. Thomas Yates.

It instructs these representatives to confer further on the matters above mentioned, and also on questions still outstanding of those remitted last year. And it again commends the whole issue to the blessing of God, and to the believing prayers and the practical interest of Christian people.

9. *A Memorandum on A Constitutional Episcopate*

ADOPTED BY THE JOINT CONFERENCE
JULY 11, 1924

1. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches asked in 1922 among other things for a further elucidation of :

- (i) What is meant by a representative and constitutional episcopate?
- (ii) And how the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with it?

This topic was discussed by the Sub-Committee in 1922-23, but was laid aside for the moment in favour of another

of the topics requiring elucidation, viz., The Status of Free Church Ministries.

2. The meeting of the Federal Council had before it in 1923 the Report of the Committee on that subject and made its reply thereto. Subsequently it has been possible to take up again the topic which was adjourned before, to discuss it further, and to present the following report upon it.

3. The phrase 'representative and constitutional episcopate' we take to mean an episcopate which is exercised, not apart from, but in conjunction with other forms of ecclesiastical authority, and especially the authority resident in the presbyterate and the yet larger and more fundamental authority that resides in the Church as a whole as guided by the Spirit of God.

4. We agree in holding that Christ as living Head of His Church has given an authority to these jointly and not in isolation one from another. The records of the Early Church and especially the Acts of the Apostles show us this in the working: and it is a recovery of co-operation in fuller measure between the Episcopate, the Presbyterate, and the Body of the Faithful that the Lambeth Appeal wished to see.

5. At the same time the Anglican representatives call attention to the large measure of such co-operation which already exists in the Anglican Communion. It is more easily discerned in the non-established Anglican Churches than in the Church of England itself.

For example, in them the representative character of the Bishop is unmistakable, for he is chosen by the Synod, which itself rests upon the votes of the Clergy and the Church Members.

Again, in such Churches, the Bishop acts 'constitutionally'; for he has no legislative power apart from the Presbyters and the Laity. In his diocesan synod

the most that he can do is to withhold his agreement to some decision made by the clergy and laity, and so suspend its operation until appeal has been made to the final Church Authority.

In the provincial synod he is one among the other Bishops of the Province, and is limited by them.

In administration he is bound by the rules of the Church which defines his personal sphere of action. In discipline the same is the case, and in judicial proceedings he is often restricted constitutionally (as is the Crown) by the action or decision of his own officials. In choosing candidates for the Ministry he must take the call of the Church into account and in ordaining priests he acts with the Presbytery.

Even in England under the Establishment a great deal of this is true: and if the Bishop in England is in some ways less dependent on the co-operation of the faithful, in other respects his freedom of personal action is more circumscribed by the law than is the case with his brother Bishop in non-established Churches of the Anglican Communion.

We are all agreed, therefore, in recognizing the value of conciliar government and we agree that it may take many forms, *e.g.* synods, presbyteries, assemblies, and the like: and we deprecate the idea that the episcopate should be for the body an exclusive authority alone invested with the privilege and responsibility of government.

Equally we hold that the acceptance of the episcopate need not deprive any Church of any powers of government that it has exercised corporately or through its subordinate authorities, or through the congregations, provided that these powers do not impair the place which we have already¹ recognized as belonging to the Bishop in Ordination.

¹ See *Church Unity*, No. 5, II. 7, 8 (pp. 36-37, *antea*).

6. The second question, namely, how the element of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with the Episcopate, invites a restatement of the position showing how far the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with the episcopate.

The Anglican representatives submit the following statement :

In the Anglican system the presbyterate has its share in all legislation, the House of Clergy has the same suspending power as the Bishop or House of Bishops. Presbyters commonly act with the Bishop in graver matters of discipline; they share in ordination to the presbyterate (as has already been noted) : they have their own minor assemblies and officers drawn from their own ranks, such as Archdeacons and Rural Deans, who under the Bishop have some administrative as well as consultative powers.

The congregation is not debarred by any principle in the Anglican system from appointing its own minister. In England this power is seldom operative, but in other parts of the Anglican Church an effective voice is given to the congregation in the choice of its minister. But there is reserved to the Bishop or his deputy the right to institute to a cure of souls. Parochial Church Councils are now the elected and recognized representatives of the congregation, and already large powers and responsibilities have been entrusted to them.

We all agree in the hope that with an episcopate so related to the presbyterate and the congregation the convictions which we severally hold in regard to the nature of the Church and its ministry would be preserved.

7. Desiring, as we all do in the reunited Church of the future, the same spirit of freedom and order, diversity and unity as characterized the Church of Christ in the Apostolic

age, and recognizing, as we all do, that the ministry is given by God *to* the Church, yet not *apart* from it, but *through* it, we believe that in the polity of the Church so united, Bishops, Presbyters or Pastors, and Congregation should be associated as closely with one another in the testimony, worship and service of the Church as their diversity of function by the gift of the same Spirit allows. Recognizing also the continued guidance of the Church by her Head, we all believe that in each of the types of polity which has secured a permanent position in our different communions some element has been preserved which can be of value and service to the whole Church.¹

10. *The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England*

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 16, 1924

The Council receives the Report and thanks the Committee for its work in connexion therewith.

In thus receiving the Report, the Council is not to be held committed (as it was not committed in connexion with former reports) to all the positions taken and the expressions used therein.

The Council appreciates the agreement in the Report that any polity possible for a united Church must combine episcopal, presbyteral and congregational elements, and further the recognition of the 'church' as the seat of 'the larger and more fundamental authority.'

The Council, however, feels that the Anglican position

¹ As the Federal Council has definitely referred the question of the relation of Church and State to the Sub-Committee, this question is reserved for further consideration. [See No. 15.]

with regard to the method of the recognition of the congregational elements—as distinguished from the episcopal and presbyteral elements—in the polity of a united Church requires further elucidation.

In re-appointing its representatives, the Council thinks it opportune, after a third year of the meetings in conference at Lambeth, to express the opinion that it is not in the interests of the unity movement itself that these conferences should be indefinitely prolonged. It suggests that those engaged in conference might at an early suitable opportunity gather together the general results which have been reached and present them for the consideration of the Churches concerned. The Council suggests that judgement on these interim reports should be suspended until some such general statement appears.

The Council, however, in saying this, does not mean to curtail whatever discussion the Committee may think still necessary of points not yet dealt with or completed. In particular the Council feels that the important memorandum presented by the Episcopal members on the subject of the Status of the Free Church Ministry is entitled to, and requires, further examination.

The Council is constrained once more to record its opinion that the discussing of points of unity between the Anglican Church and the Free Churches will always lack something of reality when it is unaccompanied by acts of more definite unity in Christian worship.

With these indications of its mind the Council reappoints its Committee.

II. A Preliminary Statement

*by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York
and the Moderator of the Federal Council of the
Evangelical Free Churches of England*

JUNE 19, 1925

Five years have passed since the issue of the Appeal to All Christian People by the Lambeth Conference of 1920. During the whole of that time conversations have been held or Conferences have been taking place between Bishops of the Church of England and spokesmen of the Free Churches. We think that it may be of interest if, at this stage, in submitting the last of our replies to the questions which we have been asked to consider, we give a brief account of the course of the Proceedings.

The Joint Conference was formed in September 1921, following upon a Report entitled 'The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal,' when the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches appointed twenty-five Free Church representatives to confer with the two Archbishops and other members of the Church of England with regard to the Appeal. In May 1922 this Joint Conference published a Joint Report on Church Unity of great importance, consisting of a Preliminary Statement and a series of agreed propositions on 'The Nature of the Church,' 'The Ministry,' and 'The Place of the Creed in a United Church.' In the following September the Annual Assembly of the Federal Council, with this Joint Report before it, set out five practical difficulties which, in particular, remained to be considered, as follows :

- i. What is meant by a 'representative and constitutional' episcopate, and how the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with it ;

2. The Status of the existing Free Church ministry ;
3. The relation of the Free Churches to Communion with which they are in fellowship in other parts of the world ;
4. The problems connected with the union between Church and State ;
5. The safe-guarding of the evangelical principles of the Reformation.

These practical difficulties have been discussed systematically by the Joint Conference, acting in the main through the Sub-Committee, which has met at regular intervals ever since. In July 1923 the Church of England representatives presented a document of unusual significance in answer to the second of the above questions, entitled 'Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry.' This was received in September 1923 by the Federal Council, which adopted a series of considered Resolutions on the main positions of the document. In the summer of 1924 the Joint Conference issued a further Memorandum dealing with the first of the five questions quoted above, entitled 'Memorandum on a Constitutional Episcopate.' This document was in turn received and considered by the Federal Council in their Autumn Assembly last year. In receiving this Report the Federal Council, while not meaning to curtail discussion, suggested that the Conferences should not be 'indefinitely prolonged,' and that those engaged in the discussions might 'at an early suitable opportunity gather together the general results which have been reached and present them for the consideration of the Churches concerned.'

The Joint Conference has this year completed its consideration of all the questions which it was definitely asked to consider, as well as certain points arising out of particular documents in the series. The Memoranda which it accordingly submits to the Federal Council are as follows :

- (1) A Second Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry; together with an Appended Note presented on behalf of the Free Church representatives on the Joint Conference.
- (2) A Memorandum with reference to the question of the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, viz. What is meant by a 'representative and constitutional' episcopate, and how the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with it.
- (3) A Short Memorandum on the relation of the Free Churches to Communions with which they are in fellowship in other parts of the world.
- (4) A Short Memorandum on the problems connected with the union between Church and State.
- (5) A Short Memorandum on the safe-guarding of the evangelical principles of the Reformation.

The Joint Conference believes that the time has now come when there might well be some suspension of its activities in order that full opportunity may be given to the Churches represented on the Conference to study and understand the documents already submitted. Every one of the Churches represented and connected with the Federal Council received a copy of the Appeal, officially transmitted to each by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1920. And it is with the cordial approval of the individual Free Churches that the Federal Council has up to this stage acted on their behalf for the purpose of elucidation and explication, deliberately leaving any 'formal pronouncement on any scheme of union or proposals thereon . . . to the authoritative Assemblies or Courts of the various Churches concerned.'

It is with profound and deliberate thankfulness that in putting forth this Statement, the last probably that we shall issue for the present, we look back along the inter-

course, the deliberations, the work and the prayers of these eventful years. In a field of inevitable controversy we have, by the Blessing of God, attained a much larger measure of agreement than was thought by most people to be possible when our Conference began nearly four years ago. Much still remains to be considered, and ample time is required during which the questions we have carefully debated and the provisional conclusions we have reached will afford matter for prayer and thought and converse in the wider circles of our friends at home and overseas.

It is our special hope that the time will be occupied by a consideration more careful than hitherto of the results of our labours on the part of the various denominations, extending throughout the world, to which the members of our Conference belong. But though for this reason we think that our deliberations ought, for the present, to be suspended, we trust that they will not be regarded as concluded; and, if it is desired, the Joint Conference and the Sub-Committee are willing to hold themselves in readiness at any time to consider any further matters which may be referred to them.

May the Holy Spirit, to whose aid we have looked in our deliberations, vouchsafe to those on whose behalf we have tried to act and speak the wisdom and understanding, the counsel and strength which will make fruitful our contribution to the growth and security of the wider unity for which we pray.

RANDALL CANTUAR :

COSMO EBOR :

J. SCOTT LIDGEIT, *Moderator of the
Federal Council.*

12. *A Second Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry*

PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
REPRESENTATIVES ON THE JOINT CONFERENCE, TOGETHER
WITH AN APPENDED NOTE FROM THE FREE CHURCH
MEMBERS OF THE JOINT CONFERENCE

JUNE 19, 1925

In a series of resolutions adopted by the Annual Assembly on September 18, 1923, the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England commented on the memorandum on the status of the existing Free Church Ministries prepared by the Anglican representatives of the Joint Conference meeting at Lambeth, and requested its own representatives to confer further on this matter. In the course of these further Conferences, we, the Anglican representatives, were requested to write some rejoinder to these resolutions which could be incorporated with them in the documents of the Joint Conference. In accordance with this request we submit the following Memorandum :

I. It is perhaps well at the outset for the sake of clearness and the prevention of misunderstandings to recall what was said in our first Memorandum, namely, that the Free Church ministries, which we regard as being within their several spheres real ministries in the Universal Church, are such ministries as are in some real measure given and exercised in accordance with the principles set forth in the first report of our Joint Conference.¹

II. Even with regard to such ministries the Resolutions of the Federal Council seem to us to assume too readily that because the Word is admitted to be Christ's Word, and the Sacraments to be Christ's Sacraments, no further

¹ Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity* (1920-1924), p. 148: p. 31 *antea*.

questions can rightly be raised as to the sufficiency of the Word preached or the Sacraments administered or of the ministers thereof. But such questions are inevitable.¹ Can it be claimed of any Word preached, of any Sacrament administered, of any ministry, that it is in perfect accord with Christ's mind and will? There are many grounds and degrees of imperfection. As to these each Church must judge in accordance with its own beliefs about the mind and will of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the exercise of the discipline which is involved in its corporate life, it must needs make decisions as to where it draws the line of allowance or disallowance in regulating its own practice or estimating the practice of others. It cannot accept a mere intention, however sincere, to preach the Word as Christ's Word or to administer the Sacraments as Christ's Sacraments as sufficient without any further questions. It must guard the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments for the sake of its own members, and in loyalty to its own conception of truth. Thus in our judgement it does not follow that because certain ministries are admitted to be real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments, they must thereby be considered as in themselves sufficient.

III. These considerations affect the question of the authority of the ministry. Spiritual efficacy is one thing, due authority is another. The latter is not involved in the former. The full admission which we have most readily made in accordance with the spirit and terms of the Lambeth Appeal to all Christian people, that the ministries we are considering possess spiritual reality and efficacy, does not carry with it the admission that they have due authority. And this matter of due authority is to us one of the highest importance. We rejoice that in the first report of our Conference all its members unanimously agreed that the

¹ First Report, I. 10 and II. 7. See No. 5, pp. 34, 36 *antea*.

episcopate should be accepted for the united Church of the future, as the means whereby the authority to the whole body should be given to the ministry. But we regard this bestowal of the authority of the whole body to the Ministry by Episcopal Ordination not merely as something which is desirable for the united Church of the future, but as something which 'from the Apostles' time' has always been provided for the Church. We see in this provision a token of the guidance of the Church by the Holy Spirit and of the Divine purpose. We regard the acceptance of it as a trust to which the Anglican Church is called to be faithful. We believe that the refusal of it, however natural at certain periods of Church history, has been responsible for many of the divisions of Christendom in the past, and that indifference to it ought not to mark any steps which may be taken in the endeavour to restore the broken unity of the Church in the future.

IV. It is true, as the resolutions of the Federal Council point out, that in the confused times of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exceptions to the rule requiring Episcopal Ordination for Ministry in the Church of England sometimes occurred. But the Resolutions admit that these cases were exceptional. They form a very insecure basis of precedent. And it must be remembered that the aim of our present conferences arising, as they do, out of the Lambeth Appeal is different from, and wider than, the aim of arrangements which may sometimes have been made to meet the difficulties of troubled times in the past history of the Church of England. For our endeavour is not merely to meet difficulties and restore unity in our own country, but to do this in such a way as may form a basis for still wider union throughout the world. However remote the attainment of such an ideal may seem, we are responsible for seeing that nothing which we do now will create a new obstacle to that attainment.

V. Here, then, we reach the heart of the problem which confronts us. On the one hand the Anglican Church requires that no one can exercise his ministry in its own congregations who has not received Episcopal Ordination. On the other hand, many—it may be most—of our Free Church brethren would be unwilling not only to receive such Ordination, but also to promote any scheme of union which required it. Is the mere statement of the difficulty the last word that can be said about it? We who represent the Anglican Church in this Conference feel ourselves to be under a constraint, both of mind and heart, to do all we can to overcome it consistently with loyalty to our principles and to our ideals of Christian unity.

VI. Before going further we think it well to call attention to the narrow limits within which so far as our own discussions are concerned the difficulty will exist. We do so not for the sake of those who have taken part in these discussions, but for the sake of the wider public who may read the records of them. It must be remembered that in these conferences we are not dealing with Free Churchmen who reject the whole idea of Episcopal Ordination. On the contrary, our Free Church colleagues have agreed with us that while the elements of Presbyterian and Congregational Order should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the united Church of the future, the Episcopate ought to be accepted as the means whereby the authority of the whole body shall be given to the Ministry.¹ The difficulty would occur only as to the position of existing Free Church ministries within the period between the adoption of a scheme of union and its completion by all the ministers of the uniting Churches possessing a common authority through Episcopal Ordination.

¹ First Report, II. 8; cf. II. 9. *Documents on Christian Unity*, p. 149 (p. 37 *antea*).

VII. The question which we desire to consider, and which we desire the Church to which we belong to consider, is whether within that period some modification may be possible of the present requirement of full and unconditional Episcopal Ordination. It will be understood that any suggestions which we, who present this Memorandum, venture to make are made solely on our own responsibility. They are made without authority, most tentatively, and only in order that (to use a prevalent mode of speech) every approach to a solution may be explored. We note first the words of the Lambeth Conference Committee on Reunion already quoted in our former Memorandum, that 'when a scheme of union has in any place been adopted situations will arise in which we should all agree that new lines of action may be followed.' We note secondly that the Lambeth Appeal expresses the hope that in such an event ministers who have not received it would accept 'a commission through Episcopal Ordination,' and adds that in so doing no one could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry, but would only be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in the reunited Church. Is there any way by which such a commission through Episcopal Ordination could be given, and by which, at the same time, the understanding that no repudiation of past ministries was involved could be made plain? We venture to offer two suggestions for the consideration of the Anglican Church and of the Free Churches represented in the Federal Council.

VIII. (1) Inasmuch as the main stress of the Lambeth Appeal is laid on securing due authority for the ministry, and inasmuch as the lack of this authority is, in our judgement, the main defect in the Free Church ministries which we are considering, we ask, might not a solemn authorization be conferred by the laying on of hands by a Bishop? It might be prefaced by explanatory words, by prayer, and

the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and it might be expressed in some such form as this: 'Take thou Authority, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands, for the Office and work of a Priest (or Presbyter). And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' We believe that such a proposal would commend itself to many of our Free Church brethren, and we think it is worthy of the careful consideration of our own Church.

But we cannot deny that it is open to many serious objections. There would be some doubt as to the exact nature of the authority which was conferred, whether it was an authority of order or only of jurisdiction. There would be the disadvantage of a solemn formula being used in a wider sense by those who spoke it, and in a more restricted sense by those over whom it was spoken. Any ambiguity might give rise to hesitation and misgiving in the minds of many faithful members of the Anglican Church, and thereby hinder the cordial acceptance of the authority thus conferred. Its sufficiency might be questioned by other Episcopal Churches. We think that a second plan which we venture to suggest would be less open to such objections.

IX. (2) It is Ordination *sub conditione*—an act of Episcopal Ordination prefaced and governed by a condition expressed in some such words as 'If thou art not already Ordained.' These words would be followed by the form of Ordination and Authorization in the Ordinal of the Church of England. But the whole of the service therein set forth need not be used. There would simply be an act supplementing the existing ministries by the essentials of Ordination, and this *sub conditione*. It seems to us that this plan would have the merit of dealing straightforwardly with the actual facts of the situation. It would recognize,

as a matter of fact, that there *is* a doubt on one side; it would not require or involve any acknowledgement of the validity of that doubt from the other side. It would be following a practice which has long been familiar in the Church with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism. Where there is a doubt as to the evidence of the fact of Baptism, or as to the use of the essential parts (baptism with water and in the name of the Holy Trinity) the Sacrament need not be reiterated but may be administered conditionally. The same practice, though less commonly, has been used with regard to Ordination. There are precedents for it in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference recommend its use in certain cases even of Episcopal Ordination.

This plan would not, we think, be open to the objections which we felt bound to mention with regard to the first plan submitted for consideration. There would be no ambiguity as to its purpose. The person thus conditionally Ordained would simply, we repeat, be acknowledging as a fact the existence of a doubt in the mind of the Ordaining authority without necessarily implying that he himself admitted its validity. The Ordaining authority would simply give whatever in its judgement had hitherto been wanting. Any discrimination between the circumstances of the previous Ordination of this or that particular minister would be unnecessary. All would be treated in the same way. There would be more probability of the Ordination being confidently accepted by all members of the Anglican Church, and of other Episcopal Churches.

X. If either of these suggestions were adopted, then the present invariable requirement of the Anglican Church that those who have not received Episcopal Ordination must be Ordained *simpliciter*, without any condition, would be suspended during the period which we are considering. It would be for the United Church to make its own regulations

for the future. Our Free Church brethren will recognize that this involves a very real change in the practice of the Anglican Church. We do not know whether it would be sanctioned by the authorities of that Church. But we who present this Memorandum believe that the suggestions we have ventured to make, especially the second, are not inconsistent with the principles, history, or position in Christendom of the Anglican Church. The Resolutions of the Federal Council say: 'The question of Ordination is the place where we look to the Anglican Church to meet their Free Church brethren.' In these suggestions we have gone as far as we rightly can go to meet them. We hope that they will regard them in the same spirit. We ask both the Anglican Church and the Free Churches to consider whether they may not form a bridge between two apparently opposed positions. With the Federal Council 'we ask no immediate or premature answer. We believe that God's guidance of us all in this matter has not ended.' We pray that the Holy Spirit of truth and unity who has already—as we humbly believe—led us to a measure of agreement which once would have seemed impossible may continue to guide our hearts and minds.

* * * * *

APPENDED NOTE

FROM THE FREE CHURCH MEMBERS OF THE JOINT CONFERENCE

We have now had fuller opportunity of considering this important Memorandum, which we have done with respect and care, and we desire to make the following *interim* statement regarding it.

- I. We heartily appreciate the spirit in which the Memorandum is written and we receive it as an expression of a sincere desire on the part of the Anglican

members of the Joint Conference to make an advance towards meeting their Free Church brethren on the difficult and crucial issue, which from the very beginning of these negotiations we have regarded as primary and vital.

2. It is not within our present responsibility to pass judgement, in the name of the Free Churches, upon the alternative suggestions made in the Memorandum, nor is it desirable that we should attempt to do so. These suggestions must be considered in due course by the Federal Council. Meantime, they should be studied not with the view of immediate acceptance or rejection, but with the earnest desire to explore all possible ways by which this problem can be met, with due regard alike to the ecclesiastical principle and to the practical situation on either side.
3. Noting, however, as we do, the preference given in the Memorandum to the proposal of 'Ordination *sub conditione*,' we feel that it would be less than candid if we did not say that, whatever may be the view taken of this by individuals among us, we are unable to hold out to our Anglican brethren any prospect of its being found adequate or acceptable by the Federal Council or by the Free Churches. We say this solely that our brethren may be under no misapprehension as to the situation.
4. For our own part, we feel that the solution of this question might be sought along lines which (a) confer an 'extended commission' mutually and not from one side only, and (b) indicate unambiguously an 'extended commission' and not an ordination. This is also the view which has been maintained in negotiations over the Lambeth Appeal in Canada and India (*vide* Dean Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity*, pp. 263-7, 312-17). We record this because, as we

have said, every possible way of meeting the problem should be before the minds of all of us.

5. We venture to think that it is not advisable that the Sub-Committee should immediately pursue the discussion of these or any other proposals in this matter to an issue; and we take it from the closing words of the Memorandum that this is also the view of our Anglican brethren. We engage to continue to give their suggestions full and careful consideration and to secure such consideration for them by those whom we represent. We believe that God, who has led us through so many difficulties up to now, will still guide us if we are faithful to the Spirit alike of Truth and of Charity.

13. A Memorandum

by the Bishop of Truro and the Rev. A. E. Garvie, D.D., with reference to the question, 'What is meant by a representative and constitutional Episcopate, and how the elements of presbyteral and congregational order may be combined with it.'

GENERALLY APPROVED BY THE JOINT CONFERENCE¹

JUNE 19, 1925

I. The Conference has already expressed its agreement that a non-episcopal Church in accepting episcopacy 'might retain a very large measure of self-government according to its previous methods,' and in the Memorandum of July 11, 1924, we attempted to show how the acceptance of the episcopate might be combined with the elements of presbyteral and congregational order. We now desire to

¹ This 'forecast in outline' was not formally adopted by the Joint Conference, but sent forward to the Federal Council with its general approval.—*Ed.*

venture a step further with some more detailed suggestions as to the possible working of a scheme for a group of Churches uniting on such lines. The way was marked out in the Lambeth Appeal, where it spoke first of 'Terms of Union' to be settled at the outset, and then of a procedure with regard to the ministry. Two alternative methods for this have been set out in the Anglican Memorandum of June 19, 1925,¹ and now, assuming some such method as adopted, we can pass on to forecast in outline the subsequent working out of it, presumably in an *interim* period (of longer or shorter length), which will be necessary before the uniting churches can be ready to attain to the ultimate goal of organic reunion.

Such forecasting is hazardous work; but we seem to have reached the point where imagination may legitimately lend its aid to faith and hope: and where we may meet the common objection, 'The thing is unworkable—inconceivable!' by saying, 'Why should it not conceivably work out somewhat as follows?':

II. Each non-episcopal denomination, when it had decided through its own proper authorities to come into the scheme, would itself choose those whom, as its representatives, it desired to have consecrated as bishops. These would be presented for acceptance to the Metropolitan of the Anglican province concerned, and he, acting with his comprovincial bishops, would consecrate them direct to the episcopate, using either the Anglican rite or some other form which had been adopted as an alternative to it for use in the Uniting Churches.

III. The method by which the candidates for consecration were chosen would be left for decision to each denomination, provided that it was made clear that the call of the Church to the man and his own inner sense of call coincided in making plain the call of God.

IV. Each bishop so consecrated would exercise authority

¹ No. 12, p. 67 *antea*.

only over those ministers and congregations of his own denomination which were assigned to him by it, and under such conditions as it should determine. For convenience sake, it would be well if (in England at least) the assignment should be made on territorial lines, and should take account of the existing territorial areas of the Anglican provinces and dioceses.

Each bishop, whether taking charge of an Anglican or a Free Church group, would have no immediate jurisdiction over those of another group, but only such authority as the bishop in charge of it might delegate to him; and in any important matter it would be advisable that this should be done formally by a definite Commission.

V. After this consecration the new bishop, associated with presbyters and other ministers, would offer to the ministers of his jurisdiction an opportunity of supplementing the ordination that had been previously conferred on each of them by receiving in some brief form a 'conditional ordination,' or whatever other equivalent may be agreed upon, as the way of 'obtaining for them a ministry (accepted) throughout the whole fellowship.'

Each man who availed himself of that opportunity would be welcomed to minister the Word and Sacraments in all Churches and congregations of the uniting denominations, when licensed to do so both by the bishop of his own denomination and by the bishop of those to whom he ministered.

Those who did not avail themselves of such opportunities (during the period in which, by agreement, they were offered) would not have the right to administer the Holy Communion to Anglican congregations, nor yet to those of any other denomination unless it is decided otherwise. But they should have full right, as being ministers of one or other of the uniting denominations, to conduct other services, and to preach, in other churches than their

own, if licensed thereto by the bishop of the church in question.

All those episcopally ordained, whether before the scheme or after it, or else *sub conditione* during the inauguration of the scheme, would equally be entitled to receive a call or appointment to any charge or cure within any of the united Churches; but if he were to be transferred from one of them to another, a permission from the bishop of each church concerned would be necessary for the transference.

VI. Having dealt thus in outline with the first steps of the uniting Churches, we come now to forecast the continuous working of the scheme during the *interim* period, and the co-ordination of the different church polities of the uniting Churches under one central assembly.

We envisage the situation somewhat as follows: Each parish, local church, or congregation would form part of an administrative unit over which a bishop would preside. Areas would be arranged so that each unit had its own local boundaries, but everywhere there would be several co-existing jurisdictions—Anglican, Wesleyan, Congregationalist, and so forth. As far as possible the local boundaries should coincide, *e.g.* a county such as Somersetshire, Cornwall or Durham would easily form not only an Anglican diocese (as at present) but also an area common to three or four Free Church bishops, presiding each over his own denomination therein.

Each unit then would be in threefold connexion with other units: (*a*) denominationally, *i.e.* with the other units of its own denomination; (*b*) territorially, *i.e.* with the other denominations of its own region or area; (*c*) centrally, with all other units grouped together in a central assembly, which would cover whatever comprehensive region was found to be most manageable, such as, for example, a country, a Dominion, a colony, a mission field, or the like.

VII. (*c*) We may look a little more closely in turn, but

in reverse order, at each of these. The new Central Assembly ought to be fully representative of bishops, clergy and laity of all the uniting Churches. It is probable that it should have more than a consultative authority. It should be able to legislate on behalf of the whole group of uniting Churches. But due provision should be made that, in legislating, the constituent Churches, as well as each House—bishops, clergy and laity—should vote separately. Legislation should only be effected by the requisite majority of each House and of each constituent Church. Also it would be best that for any change in the original Terms of Union, either by alteration or addition, a bare majority should not be sufficient.

The Central Assembly should also act as a Court of Appeal or Arbitration upon any matters referred to it, either by one of the denominational assemblies, or by one of the regional councils.

The details would need to be worked out with great care; but, for the purposes of this very slender sketch, it is enough to say that the Central Assembly should include all the bishops, together with a full and proportionate representation of the clergy and laity of all the constituent Churches.

The ministers of all the uniting denominations should be recognized as of equal status in all councils and assemblies of the uniting Churches, including those not episcopally ordained.

VIII. (b) It is in the regional areas that the clash of jurisdictions will be most felt; and there plans must be devised for harmonious working. History provides very little precedent for several concurrent, co-extensive, and co-operating episcopal jurisdictions. Normally the rule has prevailed, 'One area, one bishop'; and the emergence of two bishops of the same area has meant schism, or, at least, rivalry. But this problem might be solved by recognizing that each of the bishops in the area had authority over

persons and congregations, rather than over the area itself. At the same time, the bishops of the area, acting collectively as a college, might in some matters come to exercise a joint supervision extending over all the congregations contained in it.

And happily there are some precedents for such a plan, at least, as an *interim* measure, and leading up to the recovery of the old rule of 'One area, one bishop,' on which orderliness must ultimately depend in any episcopally-led Church. The healing of the Donatist schism in Africa, for example, was brought about through tolerating the co-existence of two bishops and two jurisdictions in one area, until such time as all the congregations could agree to coalesce under one.

Meanwhile, the regional Councils would present great opportunities for organizing common work, for reducing the waste caused by undesirable competition, for effecting economy, or better distribution of man-power both in home work and overseas; and, more important than all, for recovering the spirit of fellowship, and manifesting afresh to the world the solid Christian witness of a United Church.

All this would show itself in practical comity with regard to evangelistic and pastoral work as well as in ministrations to special classes. It would also conduce to the settlement of difficult questions, educational, social and moral, affecting the public life of the community.

Any interdenominational question or dispute could be settled by the regional Council, which should be a local counterpart of the Central Assembly, and if settlement were not satisfactorily reached there, it would go up to the Central Assembly for decision.

IX. (a) The organization of the different denominational units in their one common denomination need not differ, we suppose, from what already exists, except in so far as it is modified by the acceptance of the Terms of Union. The

powers of the bishop need not be identical in different denominations, except in so far as the Terms of Union may reserve some functions to the bishop, notably ordination and probably confirmation. The same variety would be kept as to the choice and call of a man into the ministry, the minister's appointment to a particular charge or cure, or his removal from it. To the minister probably would be reserved by the Terms of Union, the administration of Holy Communion, and (except in case of urgency) of Holy Baptism, and the official act of absolving and blessing in the Church's name. But otherwise his action would be regulated by the denominational authorities whatever they might be.

X. It may be anticipated that the uniting denominations would during this interim period retain their financial independence, and their present arrangements as to buildings, property and the like. In course of time some transference of clergy and ministers might entail some readjustments, and some transference of buildings might involve some variation of trusts; but we do not anticipate that these matters would be difficult. Any joint handling of financial questions could thus be deferred till a later stage, as common life in one communion brought the constituent bodies closer to one another, and disseminated not only the brotherly spirit, but also the businesslike knowledge needed for any further stages of financial unification.

In other respects, too, the ancient customs of the denomination would prevail. Three points may be specially mentioned by way of example :

The foreign relations of each denomination would remain as they are : each would have power to remain in communion with other Churches lying outside the scheme at its own discretion. But this would not bind the others. They would decide also, each on its responsibility; and intercommunion with one would not imply intercommunion

with all. The freedom in worship of each denomination would be retained—subject only to such restrictions as the Terms of Union might entail. The laity would not be very directly touched by any of the developments here outlined: their position, privileges and duties would be conserved. They would remain under the discipline of their own denomination.

XI. This outline has in view mainly the English problem of the reunion of the English Church with the English Evangelical Churches which are represented in our Lambeth meetings. But the wider problem of the position overseas and of the missionary areas has not been left altogether out of sight: nor must the oecumenical aspect of Reunion be forgotten if we would be faithful to the purpose of our Saviour.

But for the moment this very tentative Memorandum will provide more than enough for consideration and discussion.

14. A Short Memorandum on the Relation of the Free Churches to Communion with which they are in Fellowship in other parts of the World.

ADOPTED BY THE JOINT CONFERENCE

JUNE 19, 1925

We have contemplated that after preliminary negotiations have been completed between Churches desiring to enter into closer union there would be a period, short or long, during which each Church would retain a large measure of distinctiveness in its life and government. During this period it may be assumed that the relations between each Church and other Churches in other parts of the world would continue to be much as they are now. Any arrangements which one or more of the Free Churches in England

84 *Memorandum on the Problems connected*

might make as to the adoption of the Episcopate in the manner suggested in the memorandum on that subject would probably not be regarded by Churches elsewhere as disturbing their existing communion. If any questions arose—for example, as to the admission of ministers or members from other Churches—which were likely to cause difficulties in the fellowship of the uniting Churches, they would, it is assumed, be referred for settlement to the Central Council of these uniting Churches which we have had in view.

If this period were to issue in closer and organic union, questions as to the relation between the United Church and other Churches hitherto in communion with its constituent parts would be determined by the final terms of union.

A situation would then have been reached so different from that which now exists, that it would seem to be premature to attempt now to forecast what arrangements might then be made.

15. *A Short Memorandum on the Problems connected with the Union between Church and State*

ADOPTED BY THE JOINT CONFERENCE

JUNE 19, 1925

The discussions at the meetings of the Conference and of the Sub-Committee have dealt particularly with outstanding questions that concern the relations between the Episcopal and the non-Episcopal Churches, and it has been impossible to enter fully into the questions that affect the relations of the Church to the State. Nor indeed is it possible to deal fully at the present time with a situation that is constantly changing. At the time of reunion it is

clear that many problems would arise both in the ecclesiastical and in the civil spheres, and would have to be settled severally by the uniting Churches and the State, none of the Churches represented in the present Conferences being committed now to any particular solution.

I. From the Free Church point of view it may be said—
Two guiding principles it seems possible now to lay down :

- (1) That the Church should enjoy complete autonomy in the discharge of all its spiritual functions.
- (2) That the Church should be free to bring its highest and utmost possible influence to the service of the State in promoting the well-being of the people, and in bearing its witness to the authority of Christian principles in the affairs of the State.

II. From the Anglican point of view it may be said :

- (1) The relations between the Church of England and the State have been and are being greatly modified by the system inaugurated by the Enabling Act. It is possible that in regard to Ecclesiastical Courts proposals may be adopted which would more fully safeguard the spiritual authority of the Church.
- (2) Many Churches of the Anglican Communion have now no special connexion with the State.
- (3) No member of the Church of England would regard what is called 'Establishment' as involving any principle essential to the life of the Church.

Those who value 'Establishment'—for the sake of the Church as giving it a special association with and responsibility for the life of the English nation, for the sake of the State as expressing its religious character—would probably be unwilling to bring it to an end for the sake of any union with some of their fellow Christians in England, which would only be very partial as regards either its scope or the numbers involved. Their view would certainly be greatly

86 *Safe-guarding of the Evangelical Principles*

affected if there were the prospect of any really large or permanent union.

Thus, suppose one of the Free Churches in England entered into negotiations with the Church of England with a view to a new spiritual fellowship, and during what we have in these discussions called the interim period (when each Church would retain much of its own distinctive life and government) the Church of England desired to retain its connexion with the State, it might be hoped that the Free Church would not regard this as a bar to the spiritual fellowship desired.

Suppose this period resulted in a wish for a full organic union, then the question of relationship with the State would be determined by the final terms of union. If the union thus contemplated embraced a large majority of English Christians, then on the one hand the Church of England might be unwilling to press the continuance of its 'Establishment,' if this proved to be a fatal obstacle to union; and on the other hand the Free Churches might be willing to reconsider their attitude in view of the prospect of a really national Church, and the State on its part might be willing to alter the character and incidents of Establishment. Here again a new situation would arise wholly different from the present, which would make a reconsideration of the problem on all sides possible and indeed inevitable.

16. A Short Memorandum on the Safe-guarding of the Evangelical Principles of the Reformation

ADOPTED BY THE JOINT CONFERENCE

JUNE 19, 1925

While this question is one of very great importance, it does not seem to us that it can be profitably considered at the present stage of our discussions. The primary

object of our Conferences has been to consider together the Appeal of the Lambeth Conference to All Christian People with a view to the elucidation of what it says and what it involves. In that Appeal the Conference was content to suggest a threefold basis on which a United Church might be built up. This threefold basis was :

‘ The whole-hearted acceptance of :

- (1) ‘ The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith ; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles’ Creed as the Baptismal confession of belief :
- (2) ‘ The divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ :
- (3) ‘ A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body.’

It is on this basis that the present Conferences have been carried on, and we for our part cannot contemplate any further discussions dealing with doctrine or ceremony which would not be on the same basis.

17. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 21-23, 1925

I

The Council receives the Report, without thereby being committed, any more than in previous years, to all the

statements and opinions contained therein. In so doing, it thanks the Anglican representatives on the Joint Committee for the care, conciliation and candour with which they have considered and replied to the questions submitted on behalf of the Free Churches.

II

The Council concurs in the opinion given in the Report, and approved by the Anglican representatives and its own, that it is desirable to bring to a pause the conferences which have been taking place, in order that the various documents issued by the Joint Committee and the positions agreed on or proposed may be more deliberately considered by the Churches concerned and by the Christian mind of the country. In concurring in this, the Council expresses its deep thankfulness for the spirit of unbroken friendliness which has prevailed throughout the whole proceedings of the Joint Committee for four years; and it desires to make clear that such suspension of formal meetings at Lambeth is not to be taken to mean any rupture in this friendly relationship, or any closing of the door against the resumption of conference when God's Spirit may seem to invite to this step.

III

In view of the termination of the present series of conferences the Council discharges the Committee. It resolves to appoint a Committee of Reference on the Lambeth Appeal (to be nominated by the Standing Committee) to elucidate any points of inquiry which may arise, and generally to watch over the situation, but without power to resume formal conference till so authorized by the Council.

IV

In view, further, of the termination of these conferences, the Council, for the information of the Churches which it

represents, may fitly at this stage recall and briefly comment on the main positions regarding faith and order which have been explored by the Joint Committee. It will suffice to mention, at present, four topics :—

(i) The large measure of agreement between the Churches concerned on vital and fundamental matters of *faith* is to be recognized, valued, and emphasized. On the strength of this alone, the Free Churches declare their readiness to join with their Anglican brethren not only in moral and social, but also in religious and evangelical work wherever possible.

(ii) On the issue of *polity*, the Joint Committee was agreed that an episcopacy, not of its present character, but of a 'constitutional' character, should be an essential element in the order of the United Church, place being 'similarly' given to elements of presbyteral and congregational order as equally essential elements; and this proposal is to be taken not in one part of it only, but in its entirety. Suggestions as to how a 'constitutional episcopate' can be reconciled with the presbyteral and congregational elements are made in memoranda accompanying this Report, but it is important to notice that neither the Joint Committee nor the Council is committed to these details.

(iii) On the matter of *recognition*, regarding which the Free Church representatives have from the first meeting at Lambeth desired some declaration of the Anglican view, special note should be taken of the following statement made by the Anglican representatives in their first memorandum on the 'Status of the Free Church Ministry' :—

'It seems to us to be in accord with the Lambeth Appeal to say, as we are prepared to say, that the ministries which we have in view in this memorandum, ministries which imply a sincere intention to preach Christ's Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ has ordained, and to which authority so to do has been solemnly given by the Churches concerned, are real ministries of Christ's Word

and Sacraments in the Universal Church.' (Dean Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity*, p. 159.) *

This explicit and considered recognition of these non-episcopally ordained ministries as (a) evangelical, (b) sacramental, and (c) not schismatic but within the Church—whatever further questions as to the extent of their 'authorization' may be subsequently raised—is to be welcomed; and, if its significance is fully recognized, and if practical effect is given to its terms, it should mark a stage in the whole discussion between the Anglican and the Free Churches, and will prove a valuable basis for further progress if and when conferences are resumed.

(iv) It must, however, be observed that, on this subsequent question of *authorization* the Anglican representatives seem still inclined, despite the declaration above quoted, to insist that Free Church ministers accept ordination—at least in the form known as *sub conditione*—at episcopal hands. The Free Church representatives on the Joint Committee intimated that there is, in their view, little or no prospect of this being accepted by any non-episcopal Church. With this view the Council agrees; and it takes leave to say that it would deeply regret if the fortunes of the Lambeth Appeal, so far as non-episcopal Christendom is concerned, were finally bound up with a proposal so unconvincing and so unpromising as that of requiring the ordination to the ministry of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Church of men explicitly acknowledged to be in that very ministry. The question of authorization must be answered by some other means than ordination. It is, therefore, to be noted with satisfaction that the Anglican memorandum does not exclude the alternative method of a 'commission' which shall be (a) mutual and (b) unambiguously not an ordination. This is the line which is being followed wherever to day union between

* See p. 46, *antea*.

Churches is being achieved. It should, however, be recognized that on this question the Anglican Church has peculiar difficulties to consider; and the issue is one which, therefore, is not to be pressed to an immediate decision. (There are other matters of high importance in the report and its accompanying memoranda, but these, having been less fully dealt with, need not be referred to here.)

V

In conclusion, the Council, reviewing the whole of the conversations which have taken place—which have been carried on for a much longer period and in a far more conciliatory spirit than in any previous meetings between Conformity and Nonconformity in England—records its assurance that these conferences have done much to bring representative members of the Churches concerned into closer fellowship and to a better understanding of each other's position; and, further, that they have prepared the way to further progress towards unity in the future. To avoid any misunderstanding, it may be well to state that the discussions have been in no sense negotiations for reunion, but have been intended simply to elucidate the meaning of the Lambeth Appeal and to indicate on what lines reunion, if desired, might possibly be effected. Believing that the Spirit of God is, in these days, manifestly drawing more closely together all who name the Name of Christ as Lord and Saviour, and impressed with the urgent call to unity in face of the moral and religious problems of the world, the Council anew commends the whole matter to the mind and heart and conscience of Christian people, particularly the people of the Churches which it represents. And it prays that grace and mercy and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ may be with the brethren with whom it has been in conference, with the great Church which they represent, and with the whole Church of God.

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